LETTERS AND SERMONS,

WITH

A REVIEW OF

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,

AND

HYMNS.

By JOHN NEWTON,
RECTOR OF ST MARY, WOOLNOTH, LONDON.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
Printed for J. BUCKLAND, No. 57. Pater-noſter-Row;
and J. JOHNSON, No. 72. St. Paul's Church-yard.
MDCCLXXXVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CARDIPHONIA:

OR, THE

UTTERANCE

OF THE

HEART;

IN THE COURSE OF

A REAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Hæc res et jungit, junctos et servat amicos.

HOR. Lib. i. Sat. 3.

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

PROV. xxvii. 19.

CONTENTS.



	Page
SEven Letters to Mrs —— - -	1
Four Letters to Mrs T—— -	31
Five Letters to Mr —— - -	47
Eight Letters to the Rev. Mr —— -	65
Four Letters to Mrs P—— -	87
Six Letters to the Rev. Mr B—— -	103
Nine Letters to the Rev. Mr R—— -	125
Three Letters to Miſs Th—— - -	147
Seven Letters to —— - -	157
Five Letters to Mr C—— - -	173
Eight Letters to Mrs —— - -	191
Five Letters to Miſs D—— - -	227
Three Letters to Mrs H—— -	243
Two Letters to Miſs P—— -	253
Fourteen Letters to the Rev. Mr B——	261

SEVEN

S.

Page
1
31
47
65
87
103
125
147
157
173
191
227
243
253
261

VEN

SEVEN

LETTERS

TO

MRS ——.

LETTER I.

My dear Madam, *Nov.*—1775.

TOO much of that impatience which you ſpeak of, towards thoſe who differ from us in ſome religious ſentiments, is obſervable on all ſides. I do not conſider it as the fault of a few individuals, or of this or that party, ſo much as the effect of that inherent imperfection which is common to our whole race. Anger and ſcorn are equally unbecoming in thoſe who profeſs to be followers of the meek and lowly Jeſus, and who acknowledge themſelves to be both ſinful and fallible; but too often ſomething of this leaven will be found cleaving to the beſt characters, and mixed with honeſt endeavours to ſerve the beſt cauſe. But thus it was from the beginning; and we have reaſon to confeſs that we are no better than the apoſtles were, who, tho' they meant well, manifeſted once and again a wrong ſpirit in their zeal, Luke, ix. 54. Obſervation and experience contribute, by the grace of God, gradually to ſoften and ſweeten our ſpirits; but then there will always be ground for mutual forbearance and mutual forgiveneſs on this head. However, ſo far as I may judge of myſelf, I think this haſtineſs is not my moſt eaſy beſetting ſin. I am not indeed an advocate for that indifference and luk warmneſs to the truths of God, which ſeem to conſtitute the candour many plead for in the preſent day. But while I deſire to hold faſt the ſound doctrines of the goſpel towards the perſons of my fellow-

creatures, I wiſh to exerciſe all moderation and benevolence: Proteſtants or Papiſts, Socinians or Deiſts, Jews, Samaritans, or Mahometans, all are my neighbours, they have all a claim upon me for the common offices of humanity. As to religion, they cannot all be right; nor may I compliment them by allowing the differences between us are but trivial, when I believe and know they are important; but I am not to expect them to ſee with my eyes. I am deeply convinced of the truth of John Baptiſt's aphoriſm, John, iii. 27. "A man can re-"ceive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." I well know, that the little meaſure of knowledge I have obtained in the things of God has not been owing to my own wiſdom and docility, but to his goodneſs. Nor did I get it all at once: he has been pleaſed to exerciſe much patience and long-ſuffering towards me, for about twenty-ſeven years paſt, ſince he firſt gave me a deſire of learning from himſelf. He has graciouſly accommodated himſelf to my weakneſs, borne with my miſtakes, and helped me through innumerable prejudices, which, but for his mercy, would have been inſuperable hindrances: I have therefore no right to be angry, impatient, or cenſorious, eſpecially as I have ſtill much to learn, and am ſo poorly influenced by what I ſeem to know. I am weary of controverſies and diſputes, and deſire to chuſe for myſelf, and to point out to others, Mary's part, to ſit at Jeſus feet, and to hear his words. And, bleſſed be his name! ſo far as I have learned from him, I am favoured with a comfortable certainty, I know whom I have believed, and am no longer toſſed about by the various winds and tides of opinions, by which I ſee many are daſhed one againſt the other. But I cannot, I muſt not, I dare not contend; only, as a witneſs for God, I am ready to bear my ſimple teſtimony to what I have known

known of his truth, whenever I am properly called to it.

I agree with you, that ſome accounted evangelical teachers have too much confined themſelves to a few leading and favourite topics. I think this a fault; and believe, when it is conſtantly ſo, the auditories are deprived of much edification and pleaſure, which they might receive from a more judicious and comprehenſive plan. The whole ſcripture, as it conſiſts of hiſtories, prophecies, doctrines, precepts, promiſes, exhortations, admonitions, encouragements, and reproofs, is the proper ſubject of the goſpel-miniſtry; and every part ſhould in its place and courſe be attended to; yet ſo as that, in every compartment we exhibit, Jeſus ſhould be the capital figure; in whom the prophecies are fulfilled, the promiſes eſtabliſhed; to whom, in a way of type and emblem, the moſt important parts of ſcripture-hiſtory have an expreſs reference; and from whom alone we can receive that life, ſtrength, and encouragement, which are neceſſary to make obedience either pleaſing or practicable. And where there is *true ſpiritual faith* in the heart, and in exerciſe, I believe a perſon will not ſo much need a detail of what he is to practiſe, as to be often greatly at a loſs without it. Our Saviour's commandments are plain and clear in themſelves; and that love which ſprings from faith is the beſt caſuiſt and commentator to apply and enforce them.

You are pleaſed to ſay, "Forgive me if I tranſgreſs; I know the place whereon I ſtand is holy ground" Permit me to aſſure you, my dear Madam, that were I, which I am not, a perſon of ſome importance, you would run no hazard of offending me by controverting any of my ſentiments; I hold none (knowingly) which I am not willing to ſubmit to examination; nor am I afraid of of-

fending you by ſpeaking freely, when you point out my way. I ſhould wrong you, if I thought to pleaſe you by palliating or diſguiſing the ſentiments of my heart; and if I attempted to do ſo, you would ſee through the deſign, and deſpiſe it. There may perhaps be an improper manner of chiming upon the name of Jeſus, and I am not for vindicating any impropriety; yet could I feel what I ought to mean when I pronounce that name, I ſhould not fear mentioning it too often. I am afraid of no exceſs in thinking highly of it, becauſe I read it is the will of God, that all men ſhould honour the Son as they honour the Father. Laboured explications of the Trinity I always avoid. I am afraid of darkening counſel by words without knowledge. Scripture, and even reaſon aſſures me, there is but one God, whoſe name *alone* is Jehovah. Scripture likewiſe aſſures me, that Chriſt is God, that Jeſus is Jehovah. I cannot ſay that reaſon aſſents with equal readineſs to this propoſition as to the former. But admitting what the ſcripture teaches concerning the evil of ſin, the depravity of human nature, the method of ſalvation, and the offices of the Saviour; admitting that God has purpoſed to glorify, not his mercy only, but his juſtice, in the work of redemption; that the blood ſhed upon the croſs is a proper, adequate ſatisfaction for ſin; and that the Redeemer is at preſent the ſhepherd of thoſe who believe in him, and will hereafter be the judge of the world; that in order to give the effectual help which we need, it is neceſſary that he be always *intimately with thoſe* who depend upon him in every age, in every place; muſt know the thoughts and intents of every heart; muſt have his eye always upon them, his ear always open to them, his arm ever ſtretched out for their relief; that they can receive nothing but what he beſtows, can do nothing but as he enables them, nor ſtand a moment

ment but as he upholds them: admitting theſe and the like promiſes, with which the word of God abounds, reaſon muſt allow, whatever difficulties may attend the thought, that only he who is God over all, bleſſed for ever, is able or worthy to execute this complicated plan, every part of which requires the exertion of infinite wiſdom and almighty power; nor am I able to form any clear, ſatisfactory, comfortable thoughts of God, ſuited to awaken my love or engage my truſt, but as he has been pleaſed to reveal himſelf in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. I believe with the Apoſtle, that God was once manifeſted in the fleſh upon earth; and that he is now manifeſted in the fleſh in heaven; and that the worſhip, not only of redeemed ſinners, but of the holy angels, is addreſſed to the Lamb that was ſlain, and who, in that nature in which he ſuffered, now exerciſes univerſal dominion, and has the government of heaven, earth, and hell upon his ſhoulders. This truth is the foundation upon which my hope is built, the fountain from whence I derive all my ſtrength and conſolation, and my only encouragement for venturing to the throne of grace, for grace to help in time of need.

Till God in human fleſh I ſee,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, juſt, and ſacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my ſlaviſh fear,
His grace removes my ſins.

I am, however, free to confeſs to you, that, through the pride and unbelief remaining in my heart, and the power of Satan's temptations, there are ſeaſons when I find no ſmall perplexity and evil

reaſonings upon this high point: but it is ſo abſolutely eſſential to my peace, that I cannot part with it; for I cannot give it up, without giving up all hope of ſalvation on the one hand, and giving up the Bible, as an unmeaning, contradictory fable, on the other: and through mercy, for the moſt part, when I am in my right mind, I am as fully perſuaded of this truth as I am of my own exiſtence; but from the exerciſes I have had about it, I have learned to ſubſcribe to the Apoſtle's declaration, that "no man can ſay that Jeſus Chriſt is "Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt." I am well ſatisfied, it will not be a burden to me at the hour of death, nor be laid to my charge at the day of judgement, that I have thought too highly of Jeſus, expected too much from him myſelf, or laboured too much in commending and ſetting him forth to others, as the Alpha and Omega, the true God and eternal life. On the contrary, alas! alas! my guilt and grief are, that my thoughts of him are ſo faint, ſo infrequent, and my commendations of him ſo lamentably cold and diſproportionate to what they ought to be.

I know not whoſe letters are rapturous, but I wiſh mine were more ſo: not that I am a friend to ungrounded ſallies of imagination, flights of animal paſſions, or heat without light. But it would be amazing to me, were I not aware of human depravity (of which I conſider this as one of the moſt ſtriking proofs), that they who have any good hope of an intereſt in the goſpel-ſalvation do not find their hearts (as Dr Watts expreſſes it), all on fire; and that their very looks do not expreſs a tranſport of admiration, gratitude, and love, when they conſider from what miſery they are redeemed, to what happineſs they are called, and what a price was paid for their ſouls. I wiſh to be more like the Apoſtle Paul in this reſpect, who, though he often

forms

forms and compounds new words, ſeems at a loſs for any that could ſuitably deſcribe the emotions of his heart. But I am perſuaded you would not object to the juſt fervours of ſcriptural devotion. But this holy flame can ſeldom be found unſullied in the preſent life. The temper, conſtitution, and infirmities of individuals will mix more or leſs with what they ſay or do. Allowances muſt be made for ſuch things in the preſent ſtate of infirmity; for who can hope to be perfectly free from them? If the heart is right with God, and ſincerely affected with the wonders of redeeming love, our gracious high prieſt, who knows our weakneſs, pities and pardons what is amiſs, accepts our poor efforts, and gradually teaches us to diſcern and avoid what is blameable. The work of grace, in its firſt ſtages, I ſometimes compare to the lighting of a fire, where for a while there is abundance of ſmoke, but it burns clearer and clearer. There is often, both in letters and books, what might be very well omitted; but if a love to God and ſouls be the leading principle, I paſs as gentle cenſure upon the reſt as I can, and apply to ſome eccentric expreſſions, what Mr Prior ſomewhere ſays of our civil diſſenſions in this land of liberty,

A bad effect, but from a noble cauſe.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

My dear Madam, *February* 16. 1776.

IT gave me great comfort to find, that what I wrote concerning the divine character of Jeſus as God manifeſt in the fleſh, met with your approbation. This doctrine is, in my view, the great foundation-ſtone upon which all true religion is built: but, alas! in the preſent day, it is the ſtumbling ſtone and rock of offence, upon which too many, fondly preſuming upon their own wiſdom, fall and are broken. I am ſo far from wondering that any ſhould doubt of it, that I am firmly perſuaded none can truly believe it, however plainly ſet forth in ſcripture, unleſs it be revealed to them from heaven; or, in the apoſtle's words, that "no "one can call Jeſus Chriſt Lord, but by the Holy "Ghoſt." I believe there are many who think they believe it, becauſe they have taken it for granted, and never attentively conſidered the difficulties with which it is attended in the eye of fallen reaſon. Judging by natural light, it ſeems impoſſible to believe that the title of the true God and eternal life ſhould properly belong to that deſpiſed man who hung dead upon the croſs, expoſed to the inſults of his cruel enemies. I know nothing that can obviate the objections the reaſoning mind is ready to form againſt it, but a real conviction of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, and the ſtate of a ſinner as expoſed to the curſe of the holy law, and deſtitute of every plea and hope in himſelf. Then the neceſſity of a Redeemer, and the neceſſity of this Redeemer's being almighty, is ſeen and felt, with an evidence which bears down all oppoſition; for neither the efficacy of his atonement and interceſſion,

nor

nor his ſufficiency to guide, ſave, protect, and feed thoſe who truſt in him, can be conceived of without it. When the eyes of the underſtanding are opened, the ſoul made acquainted with and attentive to its own ſtate and wants, he that runs may read this truth, not in a few detached texts of a dubious import, and liable to be twiſted and tortured by the arts of criticiſm, but as interwoven in the very frame and texture of the Bible, and written, as with a ſun-beam, throughout the principal parts both of the Old and New Teſtament. If Chriſt be the ſhepherd and the huſband of his people under the goſpel, and if his coming into the world did not abridge thoſe who feared God of the privileges they were intitled to before his appearance, it follows by undeniable conſequence, "that "he is God over all, bleſſed for ever." For David tells us, that his ſhepherd was Jehovah; and the huſband of the Old Teſtament church was the maker and God of the whole earth, the Holy One of Iſrael, whoſe name is the Lord of Hoſts, Pſal. xxiii. 1. Iſ. liv. 8. with xlvii. 4. I agree with you, Madam, that among the many attempts which have been made to prove and illuſtrate the ſcripture-doctrine, that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, are one God, there have been many injudicious, unwarrantable things advanced, which have perplexed inſtead of inſtructing, and of which the enemies of the truth have known how to make their advantage. However, there have been tracts upon theſe ſublime ſubjects which have been written with judgement and an unction, and I believe attended with a bleſſing. I ſeem to prefer Mr Jones's book on the Trinity to any I have ſeen, becauſe he does little more than ſtate ſome of the ſcripture-evidence for it, and draws his inferences briefly and plainly; though even he has admitted a few texts, which may perhaps be thought not

quite full to the point; and he has certainly omitted ſeveral of the moſt expreſs and ſtrongeſt teſtimonies. The beſt and happieſt proof of all, that this doctrine is true in itſelf and true to us, is the experience of its effects. They who know his name will put their truſt in him: they who are rightly impreſſed with his aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion and love, in emptying himſelf, and ſubmitting to the death of the croſs for our ſakes, will find themſelves under a ſweet conſtraint to love him again, and will feel a little of that emotion of heart which the apoſtle expreſſes in that lively paſſage, Gal. vi. 14. The knowledge of Chriſt crucified (like Ithuriel's ſpear) removes the falſe appearances by which we have been too long cheated, and ſhews us the men and the things, the ſpirit, cuſtoms, and maxims of the world, in their juſt light. Were I perfectly maſter of myſelf and my ſubject, I would never adduce any text in proof of a doctrine or aſſertion from the pulpit, which was not direct and concluſive; becauſe if a text is preſſed into an argument to which it has no proper relation, it rather encumbers than ſupports it, and raiſes a ſuſpicion that the cauſe is weak, and better teſtimonies in its favour cannot be obtained. Some miſapplications of this kind have been ſo long in uſe, that they paſs pretty current, though, if brought to the aſſay, they would be found not quite Sterling: but I endeavour to avoid them to the beſt of my judgement. Thus, for inſtance, I have often heard, Rom. xiv. 23. "whatſoever is not of faith is ſin," quoted to prove, that without a principle of ſaving faith we can perform nothing acceptable to God; whereas it ſeems clear from the context, that faith is there uſed in another ſenſe, and ſignifies a firm perſuaſion of mind reſpecting the lawfulneſs of the action. However, I doubt not but the propoſition in itſelf is ſtrictly true in the other ſenſe, if conſidered detached

tached from the connection in which it ſtands; but I ſhould rather chooſe to prove it from other paſſages, where it is directly affirmed, as Heb. xi. 6. Matth. xii 33. In ſuch caſes, I think hearers ſhould be careful not to be prejudiced againſt a doctrine, merely becauſe it is not well ſupported; for perhaps it is capable of ſolid proof, though the preacher was not ſo happy as to hit upon that which was moſt ſuitable; and extempore preachers may ſometimes hope for a little allowance upon this head, from the more candid part of their auditory, and not be made offenders for an inadvertence, which they cannot perhaps always avoid in the hurry of ſpeaking. With reſpect to the application of ſome paſſages in the Old Teſtament to our Lord and Saviour, I hold it ſafeſt to keep cloſe to the ſpecimens the apoſtles have given us, and I would venture with caution if I go beyond their line; yet it is probable they have only given us a ſpecimen, and that there are a great number of paſſages which have a direct reference to goſpel-truths, though we may run ſome hazard in making out the alluſion. If St Paul had not gone before me, I ſhould have heſitated to aſſert, that the prohibition, "Thou "ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the "corn," was given, not upon the account of oxen, but altogether for our ſakes: nor ſhould I without his aſſiſtance have found out, that the hiſtory of Sarah and Hagar was a deſigned allegory, to ſet forth the difference between the law and goſpel covenants. Therefore, when I hear miniſters tracing ſome other alluſions, I cannot be always ſure that they puſh them too far, though perhaps they are not quite ſatisfactory to *my* judgement; for it may be, they have a farther inſight into the meaning of the places than myſelf. And I think ſcriptures may be ſometimes uſed to advantage, by way of accommodation in popular diſcourſes, and in ſome-

thing

thing of a different ſenſe from what they bear in the place where they ſtand, provided they are not alledged as proofs, but only to illuſtrate a truth already proved or acknowledged. Though Job's friends and Job himſelf were miſtaken, there are many great truths in their ſpeeches, which, as ſuch, may, I think, ſtand as the foundation of a diſcourſe. Nay, I either have, or have often intended to borrow a truth from the mouth even of Satan, "Haſt thou not ſet a hedge about him?" ſuch a confeſſion extorted from our grand adverſary placing the ſafety of the Lord's people, under his providential care, in a very ſtriking light.

I perfectly agree with you, Madam, that our religious ſenſations and exerciſes are much influenced and tinctured by natural conſtitution; and that therefore tears and warm emotions on the one hand, or a comparative dryneſs of ſpirit on the other, are no ſure indications of the real ſtate of the heart. Appearances may agree in different perſons, or vary in the ſame perſon, from cauſes merely natural: even a change of weather may have ſome influence in raiſing or depreſſing the ſpirits, where the nerves are very delicate; and I think ſuch perſons are more ſuſceptive of impreſſions from the agency of inviſible powers, both good and evil; an agency which, though we cannot explain, experience will not permit us to deny. However, though circumſtantials riſe and fall, the real difference between nature and grace remains unalterable. That work of God upon the heart which is ſometimes called a new birth, at others a new creation, is as diſtant from the higheſt effects of natural principles, or the moſt ſpecious imitations which education or reſolutions can produce, as light is from darkneſs, or life from death. Only he who made the world can either make a Chriſtian, or ſupport and carry on his own work. A

thirſt

thirſt after God as our portion; a delight in Jeſus, as the only way and door; a renunciation of ſelf and of the world, ſo far as it is oppoſite to the ſpirit of the goſpel: theſe, and the like fruits of that grace which bringeth ſalvation, are not only beyond the power of our fallen nature, but contrary to its tendency; ſo that we can have no deſires of this kind till they are given us from above, and can for a ſeaſon hardly bear to hear them ſpoken of, either as excellent or neceſſary.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

My dear Madam, *September* 17. 1776.

WE are much indebted to you for your kind thoughts of us. Hitherto I feel no uneaſineſs about what is before me; but I am afraid my tranquillity does not wholly ſpring from truſt in the Lord, and ſubmiſſion to his will, but that a part of it at leaſt is derived from the aſſurances Mr W. gave me, that the operation would be neither difficult nor dangerous. I have not much of the hero in my conſtitution; if in great pains or ſharp trials I ſhould ever ſhow a becoming fortitude, it muſt be given me from above. I deſire to leave all with him, in whoſe hands my ways are, and who has promiſed me ſtrength according to my day.

I rejoice that the Lord has not only made you deſirous of being uſeful to others in their ſpiritual concerns, but has given you in ſome inſtances to ſee, that your deſires and attempts have not been in vain. I ſhall thankfully accept of the commiſ-

ſion

ſion you are pleaſed to offer me, and take a pleaſure in peruſing any papers you may think proper to put into my hands, and offer you my ſentiments with that ſimplicity which I am perſuaded will be much more agreeable to you than compliments. Though I know there is in general a delicacy and difficulty in ſervices of this kind, yet with reſpect to yourſelf I ſeem to have nothing to fear.

I have often wiſhed we had more female pens employed in the ſervice of the ſanctuary. Though few ladies encumber themſelves with the apparatus of Latin and Greek, or engage in voluminous performances; yet in the article of eſſay-writing, I think many are qualified to ſucceed better than moſt men, having a peculiar eaſineſs of ſtyle, which few of us can imitate. I remember you once ſhewed me a paper, together with the corrections and alterations propoſed by a gentleman whoſe opinion you had aſked. I thought his corrections had injured it, and given it an air of ſtiffneſs, which is often obſervable when learned men write in Engliſh. Grammatical rules, as they are called, are wholly derived from the mode of ſpeaking or writing which obtains amongſt thoſe who beſt underſtand the language; for the language muſt be ſuppoſed eſtabliſhed before any grammar can be made for it: and therefore women who, from the courſe of their education and life, have had an opportunity of reading the beſt written books, and converſing with thoſe who ſpeak well, though they do not burden themſelves with the formality of grammar, have often more ſkill in the Engliſh language than the men who can call every figure of ſpeech by a Latin or Greek name. You may be ſure, Madam, I ſhall not wiſh your papers ſuppreſſed, merely becauſe they were not written by a learned man. Language and ſtyle, however, are but the dreſs. Trifles, however adorned, are trifles ſtill.

ſtill. A perſon of ſpiritual diſcernment would rather be the author of one page written in the humble garb of Bunyan, upon a ſerious ſubject, than to be able to rival the ſprightlineſs and elegance of Lady M. W. Montague, unleſs it could be with a view to edification. The ſubjects you propoſe are important; and with reſpect to ſacramental meditations, and all devotional exerciſes ſo called, I perfectly agree with you, that to be affecting and uſeful they muſt be dictated rather by the heart than by the head; and are moſt likely to influence others, when they are the fruits and tranſcripts of our own experience. So far as I know, we are but ſcantily provided with ſpecimens of this ſort in print, and therefore I ſhall be glad to ſee an acceſſion to the public ſtock. Your other thought of helps to recollection on Saturday evenings is, I think, an attempt in which none have been beforehand with you. So that, according to the general appearance, I feel myſelf diſpoſed to encourage you to do as you have purpoſed. On the other hand, if I meet with any thing, on the peruſal of the papers, which in my view may ſeem to need alteration, I will freely and faithfully point it out.

I can almoſt ſmile *now*, to think you once claſſed me amongſt the *Stoics*. If I dare ſpeak with confidence of myſelf in any thing, I think I may lay claim to a little of that pleaſing, painful thing ſenſibility. I need not boaſt of it, for it has too often been my ſnare, my ſin, and my puniſhment. Yet I would be thankful for a ſpice of it, as the Lord's gift, and when rightly exerciſed it is valuable; and I think I ſhould make but an aukward miniſter without it, eſpecially here. Where there is this ſenſibility in the natural temper, it will give a tincture or caſt to our religious expreſſion. Indeed I often find this ſenſibility weakeſt where it ſhould be ſtrongeſt, and have reaſon to reproach myſelf

myſelf that I am no more affected by the character, love, and ſufferings of my Lord and Saviour, and my own peculiar perſonal obligations to him. However, my views of religion have been ſuch for many years, as I ſuppoſed more likely to make me be deemed an enthuſiaſt than a Stoic. A moonlight head-knowledge derived from a ſyſtem of ſentiments, however true in themſelves, is in my judgement a poor thing: nor, on the other hand, am I an admirer of thoſe rapturous ſallies, which are more owing to a warm imagination, than to a juſt perception of the power and importance of goſpel-truth. The goſpel addreſſes both head and heart; and where it has its proper effect, where it is received as the word of God, and is clothed with the authority and energy of the holy Spirit, the underſtanding is enlightened, the affections awakened and engaged, the will brought into ſubjection, and the whole ſoul delivered to its impreſſion as wax to the ſeal. When this is the caſe; when the affections do not take the lead, and puſh forward with a blind impulſe, but ariſe from the principles of ſcripture, and are governed by them, the more warmth the better. Yet in this ſtate of infirmity, nothing is perfect; and our natural temperament and diſpoſition will have more influence upon our religious ſenſations than we are ordinarily aware. It is well to know how to make proper allowances and abatements upon this head, in the judgement we form both of ourſelves and of others. Many good people are diſtreſſed and alternately elated by frames and feelings, which perhaps are more conſtitutional than properly religious experiences. I dare not tell you, Madam, what I am; but I can tell you what I wiſh to be. The love of God, as manifeſted in Jeſus Chriſt, is what I would wiſh to be the abiding object of my contemplation; not merely to ſpeculate upon it as

a doctrine, but ſo to feel it, and my own intereſt in it, as to have my heart filled with its effects, and transformed into its reſemblance; that with this glorious exemplar in my view, I may be animated to a ſpirit of benevolence, love, and compaſſion, to all around me; that my love may be primarily fixed upon him who has ſo loved me, and then, for his ſake, diffuſed to all his children, and to all his creatures. Then, knowing that much is forgiven to me, I ſhould be prompted to the ready exerciſe of forgiveneſs, if I have aught againſt any. Then I ſhould be humble, patient, and ſubmiſſive under all his diſpenſations; meek, gentle, forbearing, and kind to my fellow worms. Then I ſhould be active and diligent in improving all my talents and powers in his ſervice, and for his glory; and live not to myſelf, but to him who loved me and gave himſelf for me.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

My dear Madam, *Nov.* 29. 1776.

I Am perſuaded you need not be told, that though there are perhaps ſuppoſable extremities in which ſelf would prevail over all conſiderations, yet in general it is more eaſy to ſuffer in our own perſons, than in the perſons of thoſe whom we dearly love; for through ſuch a medium our apprehenſions poſſibly receive the idea of the trouble enlarged beyond its juſt dimenſions; and it would ſit lighter upon us if it were properly our own caſe, for then we ſhould feel it all, and there would be no room for imagination to exaggerate.

But

But though I feel grief, I truſt the Lord has mercifully preſerved me from impatience and murmuring, and that in the midſt of all the pleadings of fleſh and blood, there is a ſomething within me that aims to ſay without reſerve or exception, Not my will, but thine be done.

It is a comfortable conſideration, that he with whom we have to do, our great High Prieſt, who once put away our ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and now for ever appears in the preſence of God for us, is not only poſſeſſed of ſovereign authority and infinite power, but wears our very nature, and feels and exerciſes in the higheſt degree thoſe tenderneſſes and commiſerations, which I conceive are eſſential to humanity in its perfect ſtate. The whole hiſtory of his wonderful life is full of inimitable inſtances of this kind. His bowels were moved before his arm was exerted: he condeſcended to mingle tears with mourners, and wept over diſtreſſes which he intended to relieve. He is ſtill the ſame in his exalted ſtate; compaſſions dwell within his heart. In a way inconceivable to us, but conſiſtent with his ſupreme dignity and perfection of happineſs and glory, he ſtill feels for his people. When Saul perſecuted the members upon earth, the head complained from heaven: and ſooner ſhall the moſt tender mother ſit inſenſible and inattentive to the cries and wants of her infant, than the Lord Jeſus be an unconcerned ſpectator of his ſuffering children. No, with the eye, and the ear, and the heart of a friend, he attends to their ſorrows; he counts their ſighs, puts their tears in his bottle; and when our ſpirits are overwhelmed within us, he knows our path, and adjuſts the time, the meaſure of our trials, and every thing that is neceſſary for our preſent ſupport and ſeaſonable deliverance, with the ſame unerring wiſdom and accuracy as he weighed the mountains in ſcales and hills in

a

a balance, and meted out the heavens with a ſpan. Still more, beſides his benevolent, he has an experimental ſympathy. He knows our ſorrows, not merely as he knows all things, but as one who has been in our ſituation, and who, though without ſin himſelf, endured when upon earth inexpreſſibly more for us than he will ever lay upon us. He has ſanctified poverty, pain, diſgrace, temptation, and death, by paſſing through theſe ſtates; and in whatever ſtates his people are, they may by faith have fellowſhip with him in their ſufferings, and he will by ſympathy and love have fellowſhip and intereſt with them in theirs. What then ſhall we fear, or of what ſhall we complain? when all our concerns are written upon his heart, and their management, to the very hairs of our head, are under his care and providence; when he pities us more than we can do ourſelves, and has engaged his almighty power to ſuſtain and relieve us. However, as he is tender, he is wiſe alſo; he loves us, but eſpecially with regard to our beſt intereſts. If there were not ſomething in our hearts and our ſituation that required diſcipline and medicine, he ſo delights in our proſperity that we ſhould never be in heavineſs. The innumerable comforts and mercies with which he enriches even thoſe we call our darker days, are ſufficient proofs that he does not willingly grieve us: but when he ſees a need be for chaſtiſement, he will not with-hold it becauſe he loves us; on the contrary, that is the very reaſon why he afflicts. He will put his ſilver into the fire to purify it; but he ſits by the furnace as a refiner, to direct the proceſs, and to ſecure the end he has in view, that we may neither ſuffer too much, nor ſuffer in vain.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER V.

My dear Madam, *Dec.* — 1776.

I Have often preached to others of the benefit of affliction; but my own path for many years has been ſo ſmooth, and my trials, though I have not been without trials, comparatively ſo light and few, that I have ſeemed to myſelf to ſpeak by rote upon a ſubject of which I had not a proper feeling. Yet the many exerciſes of my poor afflicted people, and the ſympathy the Lord has given me with them in their troubles, has made this a frequent and favourite topic of my miniſtry among them. The advantages of afflictions, when the Lord is pleaſed to employ them for the good of his people, are many and great. Permit me to mention a few of them; and the Lord grant that we may all find thoſe bleſſed ends anſwered to ourſelves, by the trials he is pleaſed to appoint us.

Afflictions quicken us to prayer. It is a pity it ſhould be ſo; but experience teſtifies, that a long courſe of eaſe and proſperity, without painful changes, has an unhappy tendency to make us cold and formal in our ſecret worſhip; but troubles rouſe our ſpirits, and conſtrain us to call upon the Lord in good earneſt, when we feel a need of that help which we only can have from him.

They are uſeful, and in a degree neceſſary, to keep alive in us a conviction of the vanity and unſatisfying nature of the preſent world, and all its enjoyments; to remind us that this is not our reſt, and to call our thoughts upwards, where our true treaſure is, and where our converſation ought to be. When things go on much to our wiſh, our hearts are

are too prone to ſay, It is good to be here. It is probable, that had Moſes, when he came to invite Iſrael to Canaan, found them in proſperity, as in the days of Joſeph, they would have been very unwilling to remove; but the afflictions they were previouſly brought into made his meſſage welcome. Thus the Lord, by pain, ſickneſs, and diſappointments, by breaking our ciſterns and withering our gourds, weakens our attachment to this world, and makes the thought of quitting it more familiar and more deſirable.

A child of God cannot but greatly deſire a more enlarged and experimental acquaintance with his holy word; and this attainment is greatly promoted by our trials. The far greater part of the promiſes in ſcripture are made and ſuited to a ſtate of affliction; and though we may believe they are true, we cannot ſo well know their ſweetneſs, power, and ſuitableneſs, unleſs we ourſelves are in a ſtate to which they refer. The Lord ſays, "Call upon me "in the day of trouble, and I will deliver."—Now till the day of trouble comes, ſuch a promiſe is like a city of refuge to an Iſraelite, who not having ſlain a man, was in no danger of the avenger of blood. He had a privilege near him, of which he knew not the uſe and value, becauſe he was not in the caſe for which it was provided. But ſome can ſay, I not only believe this promiſe upon the authority of the ſpeaker, but I can ſet my ſeal to it: I have been in trouble; I took this courſe for relief, and I was not diſappointed. The Lord verily heard and delivered me. Thus afflictions likewiſe give occaſion of our knowing and noticing more of the Lord's wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, in ſupporting and relieving, than we ſhould otherwiſe have known.

I have not time to take another ſheet, muſt therefore contract my homily. Afflictions evidence

to

to ourſelves, and manifeſt to others, the reality of grace. And when we ſuffer as Chriſtians, exerciſe ſome meaſure of that patience and ſubmiſſion, and receive ſome meaſure of theſe ſupports and ſupplies, which the goſpel requires and promiſes to believers, we are more confirmed that we have not taken up with mere notions; and others may be convinced, that we do not follow cunningly deviſed fables. They likewiſe ſtrengthen by exerciſe our graces: As our limbs and natural powers would be feeble if not called to daily exertion; ſo the graces of the Spirit would languiſh, without ſomething was provided to draw them out to uſe. And to ſay no more, they are honourable, as they advance our conformity to Jeſus our Lord, who was a man of ſorrows for our ſake. Methinks, if we might go to heaven without ſuffering, we ſhould be unwilling to deſire it Why ſhould we ever wiſh to go by any other path than that which he has conſecrated and endeared by his own example? eſpecially as his people's ſufferings are not penal; there is no wrath in them; the cup he puts in their hands is very different from that which he drank for their ſakes, and is only medicinal to promote their chief good. Here I muſt ſtop; but the ſubject is fruitful, and might be purſued through a quire of paper.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

My dear Madam, *Auguſt* — 1778.

YOur obliging favour of the 22d from B——, which I received laſt night, demands an immediate acknowledgement. Many things which would have offered by way of anſwer, muſt for the preſent be poſtponed; for the ſame poſt brought an information which turns my thoughts to *one* ſubject. What ſhall I ſay? Topics of conſolation are at hand in abundance; they are familiar to your mind; and was I to fill the ſheet with them, I could ſuggeſt nothing but what you already know. Then are they conſolatory indeed, when the Lord himſelf is pleaſed to apply them to the heart. This he has promiſed, and therefore we are encouraged to expect it. This is my prayer for you: I ſincerely ſympathiſe with you: I cannot comfort you; but he can; and I truſt he will. How impertinent would it be to adviſe you to forget or ſuſpend the feelings which ſuch a ſtroke muſt excite! who can help feeling! nor is ſenſibility in itſelf ſinful. Chriſtian reſignation is very different from that ſtoical ſtubbornneſs, which is moſt eaſily practiſed by thoſe unamiable characters whoſe regards centre wholly in ſelf: nor could we in a proper manner exerciſe ſubmiſſion to the will of God under our trials, if we did not feel them. He who knows our frame is pleaſed to allow, that afflictions for the preſent are not joyous, but grievous. But to them that fear him he is near at hand, to ſupport their ſpirits, to moderate their grief, and in the iſſue to ſanctify it; ſo that they ſhall come out of the furnace refined, more humble, and more ſpiritual. There is, however, a part aſſigned us: we are to pray for

the help in need; and we are not wilfully to give way to the impreſſion of overwhelming ſorrow. We are to endeavour to turn our thoughts to ſuch conſiderations as are ſuited to alleviate it; our deſerts as ſinners, the many mercies we are ſtill indulged with, the ſtill greater afflictions which many of our fellow-creatures endure, and, above all, the ſufferings of Jeſus, that man of ſorrows, who made himſelf intimately acquainted with grief for our ſakes.

When the will of the Lord is manifeſted to us by the event, we are to look to him for grace and ſtrength, and be ſtill to know that he is God, that he has a right to diſpoſe of us and ours as he pleaſes, and that in the exerciſe of this right he is moſt certainly good and wiſe. We often complain of loſſes; but the expreſſion is rather improper. Strictly ſpeaking, we can loſe nothing, becauſe we have no real property in any thing. Our earthly comforts are lent us; and when recalled, we ought to return and reſign them with thankfulneſs to him who has let them remain ſo long in our hands. But, as I ſaid above, I do not mean to enlarge in this ſtrain: I hope the Lord, the only comforter, will bring ſuch thoughts with warmth and efficacy upon your mind. Your wound, while freſh, is painful; but faith, prayer, and time, will, I truſt, gradually render it tolerable. There is ſomething faſcinating in grief; painful as it is, we are prone to indulge it, and to brood over the thoughts and circumſtances which are ſuited (like feuel to fire) to heighten and prolong it. When the Lord afflicts, it is his deſign that we ſhould grieve: but in this, as in all other things, there is a certain moderation which becomes a Chriſtian, and which only grace can teach; and grace teaches us, not by books or by hearſay, but by experimental leſſons: all beyond this ſhould be avoided and guarded againſt as ſinful and

and hurtful. Grief, when indulged and exceſſive, preys upon the ſpirits, injures health, indiſpoſes us for duty, and cauſes us to ſhed tears which deſerve more tears. This is a weeping world. Sin has filled it with thorns and briars, with croſſes and calamities. It is a great hoſpital, reſounding with groans in every quarter. It is as a field of battle, where many are falling around us continually; and it is more wonderful that we eſcape ſo well, than that we are ſometimes wounded. We *muſt* have ſome ſhare; it is the unavoidable lot of our nature and ſtate; it is likewiſe needful in point of diſcipline. The Lord will certainly chaſten thoſe whom he loves, though others may ſeem to paſs for a time with impunity. That is a ſweet, inſtructive, and important paſſage, Heb. xii. 5. 11. It is ſo plain, that it needs no comment; ſo full, that a comment would but weaken it. May the Lord inſcribe it upon your heart, my dear Madam, and upon mine.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

My dear Madam, *Nov.* — 1778.

YOur obliging favour raiſed in me a variety of emotions when I firſt received it, and has revived them this morning while peruſing it again. I have mourned and rejoiced with you, and felt pain and pleaſure in ſucceſſion, as you diverſified the ſubject. However, the weight of your grief I was willing to conſider as a thing that is paſt; and the thought that you had been mercifully ſupported under it, and brought through it, that you were

reſtored home in ſafety, and that at the time of writing you were tolerably well and compoſed, made joy upon the whole preponderate; and I am more diſpoſed to congratulate you, and join you in praiſing the Lord for the mercies you enumerate, than to prolong my condolence upon the mournful parts of your letter. Repeated trying occaſions have made me well acquainted with the anxious inquiries with which the buſy poring mind is apt to purſue departed friends: it can hardly be otherwiſe under ſome circumſtances. I have found prayer the beſt relief. I have thought it very allowable to avail myſelf to the utmoſt of every favourable conſideration; but I have had the moſt comfort, when I have been enabled to reſign the whole concern into his hands, whoſe thoughts and ways, whoſe power and goodneſs, are infinitely ſuperior to our conceptions. I conſider in ſuch caſes, that the great Redeemer can ſave to the uttermoſt, and the great Teacher can communicate light, and impreſs truth, when and how he pleaſes. I truſt the power of his grace and compaſſion will hereafter triumphantly appear, in many inſtances, of perſons, who, on their dying beds, and in their laſt moments, have been, by his mercy, conſtrained to feel the importance and reality of truths, which they did not properly underſtand and attend to in the hour of health and proſperity. Such a ſalutary change I have frequently, or at leaſt more than once, twice, or thrice, been an eye-witneſs to, accompanied with ſuch evidence as, I think, has been quite ſatisfactory. And who can ſay ſuch a change may not often take place, when the perſon who is the ſubject of it is too much enfeebled to give an account to by-ſtanders of what is tranſacting in his mind! Thus I have encouraged my hope. But the beſt ſatisfaction of all is, to be duly impreſſed with the voice that ſays, "Be ſtill, and know that I am God." Theſe words

words direct us, not only to his ſovereignty, his undoubted right to do what he will with his own, but to all his adorable and amiable perfections, by which he has manifeſted himſelf to us in the Son of his love.

As I am not a Sadducee, the account you give of the muſic which entertained you on the road does not put my dependence either upon your veracity or your judgement to any trial. We live upon the confines of the inviſible world, or rather perhaps in the midſt of it. That unſeen agents have a power of operating upon our minds, at leaſt upon that myſterious faculty we call the imagination, is with me not merely a point of opinion, or even of faith, but of experience. That evil ſpirits can, when permitted, diſturb, diſtreſs, and defile us, I know, as well as I know that the fire can burn me: And though their interpoſition is perhaps more eaſily and certainly diſtinguiſhable, yet from analogy I conclude, that good ſpirits are equally willing, and equally able, to employ their kind offices for our relief and comfort. I have formed in my mind a kind of ſyſtem upon this ſubject, which for the moſt part I keep pretty much to myſelf; but I can intruſt my thoughts to you as they occaſionally offer. I apprehend that ſome perſons (thoſe particularly who rank under the claſs of nervous) are more open and acceſſible to theſe impreſſions than others, and probably the ſame perſon more ſo at ſome times than others. And though we frequently diſtinguiſh between imaginary and real, (which is one reaſon why nervous people are ſo ſeldom pitied), yet an impreſſion upon the imagination may, as to the agent that produces it, and to the perſon that receives it, be as much a reality as any of the ſenſible objects around him; though a by-ſtander, not being able to ſhare in the perception, may account it a mere whim, and ſuppoſe it might be avoided or re-

moved by an act of the will. Nor have any a right to with-hold their aſſent to what the ſcriptures teach, and many ſober perſons declare, of this inviſible agency, merely becauſe we cannot anſwer the queſtions, How? or Why? The thing may be certain, though *we* cannot eaſily explain it; and there may be juſt and important reaſons for it, though *we* ſhould not be able to aſſign them. If what you heard, or (which in my view is much the ſame) what you thought you heard, had a tendency to compoſe your ſpirit, and to encourage your application to the Lord for help, at the time when you were about to ſtand in need of eſpecial aſſiſtance, then there is a ſufficient and ſuitable reaſon aſſigned for it at once, without looking farther. It would be dangerous to make impreſſions a *rule* of duty; but if they ſtrengthen us and aſſiſt us in the performance of what *we know* to be our duty, we may be thankful for them.

You have taken leave of your favourite trees, and the ſcenes of your younger life, but a few years ſooner than you muſt have done, if the late diſpenſation had not taken place. All muſt be left ſoon; for all below is polluted, and in its beſt ſtate is too ſcanty to afford us happineſs. If we are believers in Jeſus, all we *can* quit is a mere nothing, compared with what we ſhall obtain. To exchange a dungeon for a palace, earth for heaven, will call for no ſelf-denial when we ſtand upon the threſhold of eternity, and ſhall have a clearer view than we have now of the vanity of what is paſſing from us, and the glory of what is before us. The partial changes we meet with in our way through life are deſigned to remind us of, and prepare us for the great change which awaits us at the end of it. The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that ſolemn hour.

I am, &c.

FOUR

FOUR

LETTERS

TO

MRS T——.

LETTER I.

My dear Madam, *March* 12. 1774.

MY heart is full, yet I muſt reſtrain it. Many thoughts which crowd my mind, and would have vent were I writing to another perſon, would to you be unſeaſonable. I write not to remind you of what you have loſt, but of what you have, which you cannot loſe. May the Lord put a word into my heart that may be acceptable; and may his good Spirit accompany the peruſal, and enable you to ſay with the Apoſtle, that as ſufferings abound, conſolations alſo abound by Jeſus Chriſt. Indeed I can ſympathize with you. I remember too the delicacy of your frame, and the tenderneſs of your natural ſpirits; ſo that were you not intereſted in the exceeding great and precious promiſes of the goſpel, I ſhould be ready to fear you muſt ſink under your trial. But I have ſome faint conceptions of the all-ſufficiency and faithfulneſs of the Lord, and may addreſs you in the King's words to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou ſerveſt "continually, he will deliver thee." Motives for reſignation to his will abound in his word; but it is an additional and crowning mercy, that he has promiſed to apply and enforce them in time of need. He has ſaid, "My grace ſhall be ſufficient "for thee; and as thy day is, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength "be." This I truſt you have already experienced. The Lord is ſo rich and ſo good, that he can by a glance of thought compenſate his children for whatever his wiſdom ſees fit to deprive them of.

If he gives them a lively ſenſe of what he has delivered them from, and prepared for them, or of what he himſelf ſubmitted to endure for their ſakes, they find at once light ſpringing up out of darkneſs, hard things become eaſy, and bitter ſweet. I remember to have read of a good man in the laſt century, (probably you may have met with the ſtory), who, when his beloved and only ſon lay ill, was for ſome time greatly anxious about the event. One morning he ſtaid longer than uſual in his cloſet; while he was there his ſon died. When he came out his family were afraid to tell him, but like David he perceived it by their looks; and when upon inquiry they ſaid it was ſo, he received the news with a compoſure that ſurpriſed them. But he ſoon explained the reaſon, by telling them, that for ſuch diſcoveries of the Lord's goodneſs as he had been favoured with that morning, he could be content to loſe a ſon every day. Yes, Madam, though every ſtream muſt fail, the fountain is ſtill full and ſtill flowing. All the comfort you ever received in your dear friend was from the Lord, who is abundantly able to comfort you ſtill; and he is gone but a little before you. May your faith anticipate the joyful and glorious meeting you will ſhortly have in a better world. Then your worſhip and converſe together will be to unſpeakable advantage, without imperfection, interruption, abatement, or end. Then all tears ſhall be wiped away, and every cloud removed; and then you will ſee, that all your concernments here below, (the late afflicting diſpenſation not excepted), were appointed and adjuſted by infinite wiſdom and infinite love.

The Lord, who knows our frame, does not expect or require that we ſhould aim at a Stoical indifference under his viſitations. He allows, that afflictions are at preſent not joyous, but grievous; yea,

yea, he was pleaſed when upon earth to weep with his mourning friends when Lazarus died. But he has graciouſly provided for the prevention of that anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſorrow, which is, upon ſuch occaſions, the portion of ſuch as live without God in the world; and has engaged, that all ſhall work together for good, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. May he bleſs you with a ſweet ſerenity of ſpirit, and a chearful hope of the glory that ſhall ſhortly be revealed.

I intimated, that I would not trouble you with my own ſenſe and ſhare of this loſs. If you remember the great kindneſs I always received from Mr T—— and yourſelf, as often as opportunity afforded, and if you will believe me poſſeſſed of any ſenſibility or gratitude, you will conclude that my concern is not ſmall. I feel likewiſe for the public. Will it be a conſolation to you, Madam, to know, that you do not mourn alone? A character ſo exemplary as a friend, a counſellor, a Chriſtian, and a miniſter, will be long and deeply regretted; and many will join with me in praying, that you, who are moſt nearly intereſted, may be ſignally ſupported, and feel the propriety of Mrs Rowe's acknowledgement,

Thou doſt but take the dying lamp away,
To bleſs me with thine own unclouded day.

We join in moſt affectionate reſpects and condolence. May the Lord bleſs you and keep you, lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

My dear Madam, *April* 8. 1775.

I Have long and often purpoſed waiting upon you with a ſecond letter, though one thing or other ſtill cauſed delay; for though I could not but wiſh to hear from you, I was far from making that a condition of my writing If you have leiſure and ſpirits to favour me with a line now and then, it will give us much pleaſure; but if not, it will be a ſufficient inducement with me to write, to know that you give me liberty, and that you will receive my letters in good part. At the ſame time I muſt add, that my various engagements will not permit me to break in upon you ſo often as my ſincere affection would otherwiſe prompt me to do.

I heartily thank you for yours, and hope my ſoul deſires to praiſe the Lord on your behalf. I am perſuaded that his goodneſs to you in ſupporting you under a trial ſo ſharp in itſelf, and in the circumſtances that attended it, has been an encouragement and comfort to many. It is in ſuch apparently ſevere times that the all-ſufficiency and faithfulneſs of the Lord, and the power and proper effects of his precious goſpel, are moſt eminently diſplayed. I would hope, and I do believe, that the knowledge of your caſe has animated ſome of the Lord's people againſt thoſe anxious fears which they ſometimes feel when they look upon their earthly comforts with too careful an eye, and their hearts are ready to ſink at the thought. What ſhould I do, and how ſhould I behave, were the Lord pleaſed to take away my deſire with a ſtroke? But we ſee he can ſupply their abſence, and afford us ſuperior comforts without them. The goſpel reveals

reveals one thing needful, the pearl of great price; and ſuppoſes, that they who poſſeſs this are provided for againſt all events, and have ground of unſhaken hope, and a ſource of never-failing conſolation under every change they can meet with during their pilgrimage ſtate. When his people are enabled to ſet their ſeal to this, not only in theory, when all things go ſmooth, but practically, when called upon to paſs through the fire and water; then his grace is glorified in them and by them; then it appears both to themſelves and to others, that they have neither followed cunningly deviſed fables, nor amuſed themſelves with empty notions; then they know in themſelves, and it is evidenced to others, that God is with them of a truth. In this view a believer, when in ſome good meaſure diveſted from that narrow ſelfiſh diſpoſition which cleaves ſo cloſe to us by nature, will not only ſubmit to trials, but rejoice in them, notwithſtanding the feelings and reluctance of the fleſh. For if I am redeemed from miſery by the blood of Jeſus, and if he is now preparing me a manſion near himſelf, that I may drink of the rivers of pleaſure at his right hand for evermore; the queſtion is not, (at leaſt ought not to be), How may I paſs through life with the leaſt inconvenience? but how may my little ſpan of life be made moſt ſubſervient to the praiſe and glory of him who loved me, and gave himſelf for me? Where the Lord gives this deſire he will gratify it; and as afflictions for the moſt part afford the faireſt opportunities of this kind, therefore it is, that thoſe whom he is pleaſed eminently to honour are uſually called, at one time or another, to the heavieſt trials; not becauſe he loves to grieve them, but becauſe he hears their prayers, and accepts their deſires of doing him ſervice in the world. The poſt of honour in war is ſo called, becauſe attended with

with difficulties and dangers which but few are ſuppoſed equal to; yet generals uſually allot theſe hard ſervices to their favourites and friends, who on their parts eagerly accept them as tokens of favour and marks of confidence. Should we, therefore, not account it an honour and a privilege, when the Captain of our ſalvation aſſigns us a difficult poſt? ſince he can and does (which no earthly commander can) inſpire his ſoldier with wiſdom, courage, and ſtrength, ſuitable to their ſituation. 2 Cor. xii. 9. 10. I am acquainted with a few who have been led thus into the fore-front of the battle: they ſuffered much; but I have never heard them ſay they ſuffered too much; for the Lord ſtood by them and ſtrengthened them. Go on, my dear Madam: yet a little while Jeſus will wipe away all tears from your eyes; you will ſee your beloved friend again, and he and you will rejoice together for ever.——I am, &c.

LETTER III.

My dear Madam, *October* 24. 1775.

THE manner in which you mention Omicron's letters, I hope, will rather humble me than puff me up. Your favourable acceptance of them, if alone, might have the latter effect; but alas! I feel myſelf ſo very defective in thoſe things, the importance of which I endeavoured to point out to others, that I almoſt appear to myſelf to be one of thoſe who ſay but do not. I find it much eaſier to ſpeak to the hearts of others than to my own. Yet I have cauſe beyond many to bleſs God, that he has given me ſome idea of what a Chriſtian ought

ought to be, and I hope a real deſire of being one myſelf; but verily I have attained but a very little way. A friend hinted to me, that the character I have given of C, or Grace in the full ear, muſt be from my own experience, or I could not have written it. To myſelf, however, it appears otherwiſe; but I am well convinced, that the ſtate of C is attainable, and more to be deſired than mountains of gold and ſilver. But I find you complain likewiſe; though it appears to me, and I believe to all who know you, that the Lord has been peculiarly gracious to you, in giving you much of the ſpirit in which he delights, and by which his name and the power of his goſpel are glorified. It ſeems, therefore, that we are not competent judges either of ourſelves or of others. I take it for granted, that they are the moſt excellent Chriſtians who are moſt abaſed in their own eyes; but leſt you ſhould think upon this ground that I am ſomething, becauſe I can ſay ſo many humiliating things of myſelf, I muſt prevent your over-rating me, by aſſuring you, that my confeſſions rather expreſs what I know I ought to think of myſelf, than what I actually do. Naturaliſts ſuppoſe, that if the matter of which the earth is formed were condenſed as much as it is capable of, it would occupy but a very ſmall ſpace; in proof of which they obſerve, that a cubical pane of glaſs, which appears ſmooth and impervious to us, muſt be exceedingly porous in itſelf; ſince in every aſſignable point it receives and tranſmits the rays of light; and yet gold, which is the moſt ſolid ſubſtance we are acquainted with, is but about eight times heavier than glaſs, which is made up (if I may ſo ſay) of nothing but pores. In like manner I conceive, that inherent grace, when it is dilated, and appears to the greateſt advantage in a ſinner, would be found to be very ſmall and inconſiderable, if it was condenſed, and abſolutely

abſolutely ſeparated from every mixture. The higheſt attainments in this life are very inconſiderable, compared with what ſhould properly reſult from our relation and obligations to a God of infinite holineſs. The nearer we approach to him, the more we are ſenſible of this. While we only hear of God as it were by the ear, we ſeem to be ſomething; but when, as in the caſe of Job, he diſcovers himſelf more ſenſibly to us, Job's language becomes ours, and the height of our attainment is, to abhor ourſelves in duſt and aſhes.

I hope I do not write too late to meet you at Bath. I pray that your health may be benefited by the waters, and your ſoul comforted by the Lord's bleſſing upon the ordinances, and the converſe of his children. If any of the friends you expected to ſee are ſtill there, to whom we are known, and my name ſhould be mentioned, I beg you to ſay, we deſire to be reſpectfully remembered to them. Had I wings, I would fly to Bath while you are there. As it is, I endeavour to be with you in ſpirit. There certainly is a real, though ſecret, a ſweet, though myſterious communion of ſaints, by virtue of their common union with Jeſus. Feeding upon the ſame bread, drinking of the ſame fountain, waiting at the ſame mercy-ſeat, and aiming at the ſame ends, they have fellowſhip one with another, though at a diſtance. Who can tell how often the Holy Spirit, who is equally preſent with them all, touches the hearts of two or more of his children at the ſame inſtant, ſo as to excite a ſympathy of pleaſure, prayer, or praiſe, on each other's account? It revives me ſometimes in a dull and dark hour to reflect, that the Lord has in mercy given me a place in the hearts of many of his people; and perhaps ſome of them may be ſpeaking to him on my behalf, when I have hardly power to utter a word for myſelf. For kind ſervices of this ſort I perſuade

perſuade myſelf I am often indebted to you. O that I were enabled more fervently to repay you in the ſame way! I can ſay, that I attempt it: I love and honour you greatly, and your concernments are often upon my mind.

We ſpent moſt of a week with Mr B—— ſince we returned from London, and he has been once here. We have reaſon to be very thankful for his connection: I find but few like minded with him, and his family is filled with the grace and peace of the goſpel. I never viſit them, but I meet with ſomething to humble, quicken, and edify me. O! what will heaven be, where there ſhall be all who love the Lord Jeſus, and they only; where all imperfection, and whatever now abates or interrupts their joy in their Lord and in each other, ſhall ceaſe for ever. There at leaſt I hope to meet you, and ſpend an eternity with you, in admiring the riches and glory of redeeming love.

We join in a tender of the moſt affectionate reſpects.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

My dear Madam, *October* 28. 1777.

WHat can I ſay for myſelf, to let your obliging letter remain ſo long unanſwered, when your kind ſolicitude for us induced you to write? I am aſhamed of the delay. You would have heard from me immediately, had I been at home. But I have reaſon to be thankful that we were providentially called to London a few days before the fire; ſo that Mrs —— was mercifully preſerved from

from the alarm and ſhock ſhe muſt have felt, had ſhe been upon the ſpot. Your letter followed me hither, and was in my poſſeſſion more than a week before my return. I purpoſed writing every day, but indeed I was much hurried and engaged. Yet I am not excuſed: I ought to have ſaved time from my meals or my ſleep, rather than appear negligent or ungrateful. I now ſeize the firſt poſt I could write by ſince I came home. The fire devoured twelve houſes; and it was a mercy, and almoſt a miracle, that the whole town was not deſtroyed; which muſt, humanly ſpeaking, have been the caſe, had not the night been calm, as two thirds of the buildings were thatched. No lives were loſt; no perſon conſiderably hurt; and I believe the contributions of the benevolent will prevent the loſs from being greatly felt. It was at the diſtance of a quarter of a mile from my houſe.

Your command limits my attention, at preſent, to a part of your letter, and points me out a ſubject. Yet at the ſame time you lay me under a difficulty. I would not willingly offend you, and I hope the Lord has taught me not to aim at ſaying handſome things. I deal not in compliments, and religious compliments are the moſt unſeemly of any. But why might I not expreſs my ſenſe of the grace of God, manifeſted in you as well as in another? I believe our hearts are all alike, deſtitute of every good, and prone to every evil. Like money from the ſame mint, they bear the ſame impreſſion of total depravity: but grace makes a difference, and grace deſerves the praiſe. Perhaps it ought not greatly to diſpleaſe you, that others do, and muſt, and will think better of you than you do of yourſelf. If I do, how can I help it, when I form my judgement entirely from what you ſay and write? I cannot conſent, that you ſhould ſeriouſly appoint me to examine and judge of your ſtate. I thought you

you knew, beyond the ſhadow of a doubt, what your views and deſires are; yea, you expreſs them in your letter, in full agreement with what the ſcripture declares of the principles, deſires, and feelings of a Chriſtian. It is true that you feel contrary principles, that you are conſcious of defects and defilements; but it is equally true, that you could not be right if you did not feel theſe things. To be conſcious of them and humbled for them, is one of the ſureſt marks of grace; and to be more deeply ſenſible of them than formerly, is the beſt evidence of growth in grace. But when the enemy would tempt us to doubt and diſtruſt, becauſe we are not perfect, then he fights, not only againſt our peace, but againſt the honour and faithfulneſs of our dear Lord. Our righteouſneſs is in him, and our hope depends, not upon the exerciſe of grace in us, but upon the fulneſs of grace and love in him, and upon his obedience unto death.

There is, my dear Madam, a difference between the holineſs of a ſinner and that of an angel. The angels have never ſinned, nor have they taſted of redeeming love; they have no inward conflicts, no law of ſin warring in their members: their obedience is perfect; their happineſs is complete. Yet if I be found among redeemed ſinners, I need not wiſh to be an angel. Perhaps God is not leſs glorified by your obedience, and not to ſhock you, I will add by mine, than by Gabriel's. It is a mighty manifeſtation of his grace indeed, when it can live, and act, and conquer in ſuch hearts as ours; when, in defiance of an evil nature and an evil world, and all the force and ſubtilty of Satan, a weak worm is ſtill upheld, and enabled not only to climb, but to threſh the mountains; when a ſmall ſpark is preſerved through ſtorms and floods. In theſe circumſtances, the work of grace is to be eſtimated, not merely from its imperfect appear-

ance,

ance, but from the difficulties it has to ſtruggle with and overcome; and therefore our holineſs does not conſiſt in great attainments, but in ſpiritual deſires, in hungerings, thirſtings, and mournings; in humiliation of heart, poverty of ſpirit, ſubmiſſion, meekneſs; in cordial admiring thoughts of Jeſus, and dependence upon him alone for all we want. Indeed theſe may be ſaid to be great attainments; but they who have moſt of them are moſt ſenſible that they, in and of themſelves, are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, and ſee daily cauſe for abhorring themſelves, and repenting in duſt and aſhes.

Our view of death will not alway be alike, but in proportion to the degree in which the Holy Spirit is pleaſed to communicate his ſenſible influence. We may anticipate the moment of diſſolution with pleaſure and deſire in the morning, and be ready to ſhrink from the thought of it before night. But though our frames and perceptions vary, the report of faith concerning it is the ſame. The Lord uſually reſerves dying ſtrength for a dying hour. When Iſrael was to paſs Jordan, the Ark was in the river; and though the rear of the hoſt could not ſee it, yet as they ſucceſſively came forward and approached the banks, they all beheld the Ark, and all went ſafely over. As you are not weary of living, if it be the Lord's pleaſure, ſo I hope, for the ſake of your friends and the people whom you love, he will ſpare you amongſt us a little longer; but when the time ſhall arrive which he has appointed for your diſmiſſion, I make no doubt but he will overpower all your fears, ſilence all your enemies, and give you a comfortable, triumphant entrance into his kingdom. You have nothing to fear from death; for Jeſus, by dying, has diſarmed it of its ſting, has perfumed the grave, and opened the gates of glory for his believing people. Satan,

ſo

ſo far as he is permitted, will aſſault our peace, but he is a vanquiſhed enemy: our Lord holds him in a chain, and ſets him bounds which he cannot paſs. He provides for us likewiſe the whole armour of God, and has promiſed to cover our heads himſelf in the day of battle, to bring us honourably through every ſkirmiſh, and to make us more than conquerors at laſt. If you think my ſhort unexpected interview with Mr C—— may juſtify my wiſhing he ſhould know that I reſpect his character, love his perſon, and rejoice in what the Lord has done and is doing for him and by him, I beg you to tell him ſo: but I leave it entirely to you.

We join in moſt affectionate reſpects.

I am, &c.

FIVE

FIVE LETTERS TO MR ——.

LETTER I.

Dear Sir, *March 7. 1765.*

YOur favour of the 19th February came to my hand yeſterday. I have read it with attention, and very willingly ſit down to offer you my thoughts. Your caſe reminds me of my own: my firſt deſires towards the miniſtry were attended with great uncertainties and difficulties, and the perplexity of my own mind was heightened by the various and oppoſite judgements of my friends. The advice I have to offer is the reſult of painful experience and exerciſe, and for this reaſon perhaps may not be unacceptable to you. I pray our gracious Lord to make it uſeful.

I was long diſtreſſed, as you are, about what was or was not a proper call to the miniſtry; it now ſeems to me an eaſy point to ſolve, but perhaps will not be ſo to you, till the Lord ſhall make it clear to yourſelf in your own caſe. I have not room to ſay ſo much as I could: in brief, I think it principally includes three things:

1. A warm and earneſt deſire to be employed in this ſervice. I apprehend, the man who is once moved by the Spirit of God to this work will prefer it, if attainable, to thouſands of gold and ſilver; ſo that though he is at times intimidated by a ſenſe of its importance and difficulty, compared with his own great inſufficiency (for it is to be preſumed a call of this ſort, if indeed from God, will be accompanied with humility and ſelf-abaſement,) yet he cannot give it up. I hold it a good rule to in-

quire in this point, whether the deſire to preach is moſt fervent in our moſt lively and ſpiritual frames, and when we are moſt laid in the duſt before the Lord? If ſo, it is a good ſign. But if, as is ſometimes the caſe, a perſon is very earneſt to be a preacher to others, when he finds but little hungerings and thirſtings after grace in his own ſoul, it is then to be feared, his zeal ſprings rather from a ſelfiſh principle than from the Spirit of God.

2. Beſides this affectionate deſire and readineſs to preach, there muſt in due ſeaſon appear ſome competent ſufficiency as to gifts, knowledge, and utterance. Surely, if the Lord ſends a man to teach others, he will furniſh him with the means. I believe many have intended well in ſetting up for preachers, who yet went beyond or before their call in ſo doing. The main difference between a miniſter and a private Chriſtian ſeems to conſiſt in theſe miniſterial gifts, which are imparted to him, not for his own ſake, but for the edification of others. But then I ſay, theſe are to appear in due ſeaſon; they are not to be expected inſtantaneouſly, but gradually, in the uſe of proper means. They are neceſſary for the diſcharge of the miniſtry; but not neceſſary as pre-requiſites to warrant our deſires after it. In your caſe, you are young, and have time before you; therefore I think you need not as yet perplex yourſelf with inquiring if you have theſe gifts already: it is ſufficient if your deſire is fixed, and you are willing, in the way of prayer and diligence, to wait upon the Lord for them: as yet you need them not.

3. That which finally evidences a proper call is a correſpondent opening in Providence, by a gradual train of circumſtances pointing out the means, the time, the place, of actually entering upon the work. And till this coincidence arrives, you muſt not expect to be always clear from heſitation in your

your own mind. The principal caution on this head is, not to be too haſty in catching at firſt appearances. If it be the Lord's will to bring you into his miniſtry, he has already appointed your place and ſervice; and though you know it not at preſent, you ſhall at a proper time. If you had the talents of an angel, you could do no good with them till his hour is come, and till he leads you to the people whom he has determined to bleſs by your means. It is very difficult to reſtrain ourſelves within the bounds of prudence here, when our zeal is warm, a ſenſe of the love of Chriſt upon our hearts, and a tender compaſſion for poor ſinners is ready to prompt us to break out too ſoon;—but he that believeth ſhall not make haſte. I was about five years under this conſtraint: ſometimes I thought I muſt preach, though it was in the ſtreets. I liſtened to every thing that ſeemed plauſible, and to many things that were not ſo. But the Lord graciouſly, and as it were inſenſibly hedged up my way with thorns; otherwiſe, if I had been left to my own ſpirit, I ſhould have put it quite out of my power to have been brought into ſuch a ſphere of uſefulneſs, as he in his good time has been pleaſed to lead me to. And I can now ſee clearly, that at the time I would firſt have gone out, though my intention was, I hope, good in the main, yet I over-rated myſelf, and had not that ſpiritual judgement and experience, which are requiſite for ſo great a ſervice. I wiſh you therefore to take time; and if you have a deſire to enter into the Eſtabliſhed Church, endeavour to keep your zeal within moderate bounds, and avoid every thing that might unneceſſarily clog your admiſſion with difficulties. I would not have you hide your profeſſion, or to be backward to ſpeak for God; but avoid what looks like preaching, and be content with being a learner

in the ſchool of Chriſt for ſome years. The delay will not be loſt time; you will be ſo much the more acquainted with the goſpel, with your own heart, and with human nature: the laſt is a neceſſary branch of a miniſter's knowledge, and can only be acquired by comparing what paſſes within us, and around us, with what we read in the word of God.

I am glad to find you have a diſtaſte both for Arminian and Antinomian doctrines;—but let not the miſtakes of others ſit too heavy upon you. Be thankful for the grace that has made you to differ; be ready to give a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſs and fear; but beware of engaging in diſputes, without evident neceſſity, and ſome probable hope of uſefulneſs. They tend to eat out the life and ſavour of religion, and to make the ſoul lean and dry. Where God has begun a real work of grace, incidental miſtakes will be leſſened by time and experience; where he has not, it is of little ſignification what ſentiments people hold, or whether they call themſelves Arminians or Calviniſts.

I agree with you, it is time enough for you to think of Oxford yet; and that if your purpoſe is fixed, and all circumſtances render it prudent and proper to devote yourſelf to the miniſtry, you will do well to ſpend a year or two in private ſtudies. It would be further helpful, in this view, to place yourſelf where there is goſpel preaching, and a lively people. If your favourable opinion of this place ſhould induce you to come here, I ſhall be very ready to give you every aſſiſtance in my power. As I have trod exactly the path you ſeem to be ſetting out in, I might ſo far perhaps be more ſerviceable than thoſe who are in other reſpects much better qualified to aſſiſt you. I doubt not but in this,

this, and every other ſtep, you will intreat the Lord's direction; and I hope you will not forget to pray for,

Sir, your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir, *Jan.* 7. 1767.

I Muſt beg you (once for all) to releaſe me from any conſtraint about the length or frequency of my letters. Believe that I think of you, and pray for you, when you do not hear from me. Your correſpondence is not quite ſo large as mine, therefore you may write the oftener: your letters will be always welcome; and I will write to you when I find a leiſure hour, and have any thing upon my mind to offer.

You ſeem ſenſible where your moſt obſervable failing lies, and to take reproof and admonition concerning it in good part; I therefore hope and believe the Lord will give you a growing victory over it. You muſt not expect habits and tempers will be eradicated inſtantaneouſly; but by perſeverance in prayer, and obſervation upon the experiences of every day, much may be done in time. Now and then you will (as is uſual in the courſe of war) loſe a battle; but be not diſcouraged, but rally your forces, and return to the fight. There is a comfortable word, a leaf of the tree of life, for healing the wounds we receive, in 1 John, ii. 1. If the enemy ſurpriſes you, and your heart ſmites you, do not ſtand aſtoniſhed as if there was no help, nor give way to ſorrow as if there was no hope, nor attempt to heal yourſelf; but away im-

mediately to the throne of grace, to the great Phyſician, to the compaſſionate High Prieſt, and tell him all. Satan knows, that if he can keep us from confeſſion our wounds will rankle; but do you profit by David's experience, Pſal. xxxii. 3.—5. When we are ſimple and open-hearted in abaſing ourſelves before the Lord, though we have acted fooliſhly and ungratefully, he will ſeldom let us remain long without affording us a ſenſe of his compaſſion; for he is gracious; he knows our frame, and how to bear with us, though we can hardly bear with ourſelves or with one another.

The main thing is to have *the heart right with God:* this will bring us in the end ſafely through many miſtakes and blunders: but a double mind, a ſelfiſh ſpirit, that would halve things between God and the world, the Lord abhors. Though I have not yet had many opportunities of commending your *prudence*, I have always had a good opinion of your *ſincerity* and *integrity:* if I am not miſtaken in this, I make no doubt of your doing well. If the Lord is pleaſed to bleſs you, he will undoubtedly make you humble; for you cannot be either happy or ſafe, or have any probable hope of abiding uſefulneſs, without it. I do not know that I have had any thing ſo much at heart in my connections with you, as to impreſs you with a ſenſe of the neceſſity and advantages of an humble frame of ſpirit: I hope it has not been in vain. O! to be little in our own eyes! this is the ground-work of every grace; this leads to a continual dependence upon the Lord Jeſus; this is the ſpirit which he has promiſed to bleſs; this conciliates us good-will and acceptance amongſt men; for he that abaſeth himſelf is ſure to be honoured. And that this temper is ſo hard to attain and preſerve, is a ſtriking proof of our depravity. For are we not ſinners? Were we not rebels and enemies before

before we knew the goſpel? and have we not been unfaithful, backſliding, and unprofitable ever ſince? Are we not redeemed by the blood of Jeſus? and can we ſtand a ſingle moment except he upholds us? Have we any thing which we have not received; or have we received any thing which we have not abuſed? Why then is duſt and aſhes proud?

I am glad you have found ſome ſpiritual acquaintance in your barren land. I hope you will be helpful to them, and they to you. You do well to guard againſt every appearance of evil. If you are heartily for Jeſus, Satan owes you a grudge. One way or other he will try to cut you out work, and the Lord may ſuffer him to go to the length of his chain. But though you are to keep your eye upon him, and expect to hear from him at every ſtep, you need not be ſlaviſhly afraid of him: for Jeſus is ſtronger and wiſer than he; and there is a complete ſuit of armour provided for all who are engaged on the Lord's ſide.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir, *Oct.* 20. 1767.

A Concern for the perplexity you have met with, from objections which have been made againſt ſome expreſſions in my printed ſermons, and in general againſt exhorting ſinners to believe in Jeſus, engages me to write immediately; otherwiſe I ſhould have waited a little longer; for we are now upon the point of removing to the vicarage, and I believe this will be the laſt letter I ſhall write

from the old houſe. I ſhall chiefly confine myſelf at preſent to the ſubject you propoſe.

In the firſt place, I beg you to be upon your guard againſt a reaſoning ſpirit. Search the ſcriptures; and where you can find a plain rule or warrant for any practice, go boldly on; and be not diſcouraged becauſe you may not be clearly able to anſwer or reconcile every difficulty that may either occur to your own mind, or be put in your way by others. Our hearts are very dark and narrow, and the very root of all apoſtaſy is a proud diſpoſition to queſtion the neceſſity or propriety of divine appointments. But the child-like ſimplicity of faith is to follow God without reaſoning; taking it for granted a thing muſt be right if he directs it, and charging all ſeeming inconſiſtencies to the account of our own ignorance.

I ſuppoſe the people that trouble you upon this head are of two ſorts: 1ſt, Thoſe who preach upon Arminian principles, and ſuppoſe a free will in man, in a greater or leſs degree, to turn to God when the goſpel is propoſed. Theſe, if you ſpeak to ſinners at large, though they will approve of your doing ſo, will take occaſion perhaps to charge you with acting in contradiction to your own principles. So it ſeems Mr —— has ſaid. I love and honour that man greatly, and I beg you will tell him ſo from me; and tell him farther, that the reaſon why he is not a Calviniſt, is becauſe he miſapprehends our principles. If I had a proper call, I would undertake to prove the direct contrary; namely, that to exhort and deal plainly with ſinners, to ſtir them up to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold of eternal life, is an attempt not reconcileable to ſober reaſon upon any other grounds than thoſe doctrines which we are called Calviniſts for holding; and that all the abſurdities which are charged upon us, as conſequences of what

what we teach, are indeed truly chargeable upon thoſe who differ from us in theſe points. I think this unanſwerably proved by Mr Edwards, in his diſcourſe on the freedom of the will; though the chain of reaſoning is ſo cloſe, that few will give attention and pains to purſue it. As to myſelf, if I was not a Calviniſt, I think I ſhould have no more hope of ſucceſs in preaching to men, than to horſes or cows.

But theſe objections are more frequently urged by Calviniſts themſelves; many of them, I doubt not, good men, but betrayed into a curioſity of ſpirit, which often makes their miniſtry (if miniſters) dry and inefficacious, and their converſation ſour and unſavoury. Such a ſpirit is too prevalent in many profeſſors, that if a man diſcovers a warm zeal for the glory of God, and is enabled to bear a faithful teſtimony to the goſpel truths; yea, though the Lord evidently bleſſes him, they overlook all, and will undervalue a ſermon, which upon the whole they cannot but acknowledge to be ſcriptural, if they meet with a ſingle ſentence contrary to the opinion they have taken up. I am ſorry to ſee ſuch a ſpirit prevailing. But this I obſerve, that the miniſters who give into this way, though good men and good preachers in other reſpects, are ſeldom very uſeful or very zealous; and thoſe who are in private life, are more ready for dry points of diſputation, at leaſt harping upon a ſtring of doctrines, than for experimental and heart-ſearching converſe, whereby one may warm and edify another. Bleſſed be God, who has kept me and my people from this turn: if it ſhould ever creep in or ſpread among us, I ſhould be ready to write *Ichabod* upon our aſſemblies.

I adviſe you therefore to keep cloſe to the Bible and prayer: bring your difficulties to the Lord, and intreat him to give you and maintain in you a

ſimple ſpirit. Search the ſcripture. How did Peter deal with Simon Magus? We have no right to think worſe of any who can hear us, than the apoſtle did of him. He ſeemed almoſt to think his caſe deſperate, and yet he adviſed him to repentance and prayer. Examine the ſame apoſtle's diſcourſe, Acts, iii. and the cloſe of St Paul's ſermon, Acts, xiii. The power is all of God; the means are likewiſe of his appointment; and he always is pleaſed to work by ſuch means as may ſhew that the power is his. What was Moſes's rod in itſelf, or the trumpets that threw down Jericho? What influence could the pool of Siloam have, that the eyes of the blind man by waſhing in it ſhould be opened? or what could Ezekiel's feeble breath contribute to the making dry bones live? All theſe means were exceedingly diſproportionate to the effect; but he who ordered them to be uſed accompanied them with his power. Yet if Moſes had gone without his rod; if Joſhua had ſlighted the ram's horns; if the prophet had thought it fooliſhneſs to ſpeak to dry bones, or the blind man refuſed to waſh his eyes, nothing could have been done. The ſame holds good in the preſent ſubject: I do not reaſon, expoſtulate, and perſuade ſinners, becauſe I think I can prevail with them, but becauſe the Lord has commanded it. He directs me to addreſs them as reaſonable creatures; to take them by every handle; to ſpeak to their conſciences; to tell them of the terrors of the Lord, and of his tender mercies; to argue with them what good they find in ſin; whether they do not need a Saviour; to put them in mind of death, judgement, and eternity, &c. When I have done all, I know it is to little purpoſe, except the Lord ſpeaks to their hearts; and this to his own, and at his own time, I am ſure he will, becauſe he has promiſed it. See Iſaiah, lv. 10. 11. Matth. xxviii. 20. Indeed I have heard expreſſions in the warmth

warmth of delivery which I could not wholly approve, and therefore do not imitate. But in general, I ſee no preaching made very uſeful for the gathering of ſouls, where poor ſinners are ſhut out of the diſcourſe. I think one of the cloſeſt and moſt moving addreſſes to ſinners I ever met with is in Dr Owen's expoſition of the 130th Pſalm (in my edition) from p. 243. to 276. If you get it and examine it, I think you will find it all agreeable to ſcripture; and he was a ſteady, deep-ſighted Calviniſt. I wiſh you to ſtudy it well, and make it your pattern. He handles the ſame point likewiſe in other places, and ſhews the weakneſs of the exceptions taken ſomewhere at large, but I cannot juſt now find the paſſage. Many think themſelves quite right, becauſe they have not had their thoughts exerciſed at large, but have confined themſelves to one track. There are extremes in every thing. I pray God to ſhew you the golden mean.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir, *Aug.* 30. 1770.

I Would ſteal a few minutes here to write, leſt I ſhould not have leiſure at home. I have not your letter with me, and therefore can only anſwer ſo far as I retain a general remembrance of the contents.

You will doubtleſs find rather perplexity than advantage from the multiplicity of advice you may receive, if you endeavour to reconcile and adopt the very different ſentiments of your friends. I

think it will be beſt to make uſe of them in a full latitude, that is, to correct and qualify them one by another, and to borrow a little from each without confining yourſelf entirely to any. You will probably be adviſed to different extremes, it will then be impoſſible to follow both; but it may be practicable to find a middle path between them: and I believe this will generally prove the beſt and ſafeſt method. Only conſult your own temper, and endeavour to incline rather to that ſide to which you are the leaſt diſpoſed, by the ordinary ſtrain of your own inclination; for on that ſide you will be in the leaſt danger of erring. Warm and haſty diſpoſitions will ſeldom move too ſlow, and thoſe who are naturally languid and cool are as little liable to over-act their part.

With reſpect to the particulars you inſtance, I have generally thought you warm and enterpriſing enough, and therefore thought it beſt to reſtrain you; but I meant only to hold you in, till you had acquired ſome farther knowledge and obſervation both of yourſelf and of others. I have the pleaſure to hope (eſpecially of late) that you are become more ſelf-diffident and wary than you was ſome time ago. And therefore as your years and time are advancing, and you have been for a tolerable ſpace under a probation of ſilence, I can make no objection to your attempting ſometimes to ſpeak in ſelect ſocieties; but let your attempts be confined to ſuch, I mean where you are acquainted with the people, or the leading part of them, and be upon your guard againſt opening yourſelf too much amongſt ſtrangers;—and again, I earneſtly deſire you would not attempt any thing of this ſort in a very public way, which may perhaps bring you under inconveniencies, and will be inconſiſtent with the part you ought to act (in my judgement) from the time you receive Epiſcopal ordination. You may remember

remember a ſimile I have ſometimes uſed of green fruit: children are impatient to have it while it is green, but perſons of more judgement will wait till it is ripe. Therefore I would wiſh your exhortations to be brief, private, and not very frequent. Rather give yourſelf to reading, meditation, and prayer.

As to ſpeaking without notes, in order to do it ſucceſsfully, a fund of knowledge ſhould be firſt poſſeſſed. Indeed, in ſuch ſocieties as I hope you will confine your attempts to, it would not be practicable to uſe notes; but I mean, that if you deſign to come out as a preacher without notes from the firſt, you muſt uſe double diligence in ſtudy: your reading muſt not be confined to the ſcriptures; you ſhould be acquainted with church-hiſtory, have a general view of divinity as a ſyſtem, know ſomething of the ſtate of controverſies in paſt times and at preſent, and indeed of the general hiſtory of mankind. I do not mean that you ſhould enter deeply into theſe things; but you will need to have your mind enlarged, your ideas increaſed, your ſtyle and manner formed; you ſhould read, think, write, compoſe, and uſe all diligence to exerciſe and ſtrengthen your faculties. If you would ſpeak extempore as a clergyman, you muſt be able to come off roundly, and to fill up your hour with various matter, in tolerable coherence, or elſe you will not be able to overcome the prejudice which uſually prevails amongſt the people. Perhaps it may be as well to uſe ſome little ſcheme in the note way, eſpecially at the beginning; but a little trial will beſt inform you what is moſt expedient.

Let your backwardneſs to prayer and reading the ſcripture be ever ſo great, you muſt ſtrive againſt it. This backwardneſs, with the doubts you ſpeak of, are partly from your own evil heart, but perhaps

haps chiefly temptations of Satan: he knows, if he can keep you from drawing water out of the wells of ſalvation, he will have much advantage. My ſoul goes often mourning under the ſame complaints, but at times the Lord gives me a little victory. I hope he will over-rule all our trials, to make us more humble, dependent, and to give us tenderneſs of ſpirit towards the diſtreſſed. The exerciſed and experienced Chriſtian, by the knowledge he has gained of his own heart, and the many difficulties he has had to ſtruggle with, acquires a ſkill and compaſſion in dealing with others; and without ſuch exerciſe, all our ſtudy, diligence, and gifts in other ways, would leave us much at a loſs in ſome of the moſt important parts of our calling.

You have given yourſelf to the Lord for the miniſtry; his providence has thus far favoured your views; therefore harbour not a thought of flinching from the battle, becauſe the enemy appears in view, but reſolve to endure hardſhip, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. Lift up your banner in his name; truſt in him, and he will ſupport you; but above all things, be ſure not to be either enticed or terrified from the privilege of a throne of grace.

Who your enemies are, or what they ſay, I know not; for I never converſed with them. Your friends here have thought you at times harſh and haſty in your manner, and rather inclining to ſelf-confidence. Theſe things I have often reminded you of; but I conſidered them as blemiſhes uſually attendant upon youth, and which experience, temptation, and prayer would correct. I hope and believe you will do well. You will have a ſhare in my prayers and beſt advice; and when I ſee occaſion to offer a word of reproof, I ſhall not uſe any reſerve.

Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER V.

Dear Sir, *July* 25. 1772.

I Am glad to hear you are accommodated at D—, where I hope your beſt endeavours will not be wanting to make yourſelf agreeable, by an humble, inoffenſive, and circumſpect behaviour.

I greatly approve of your ſpeaking from one of the leſſons in the afternoon; you will find it a great help to bring you gradually to that habit and readineſs of expreſſion which you deſire; and you will perhaps find it make more impreſſion upon your hearers than what you read to them from the pulpit. However, I would not diſcourage or diſſuade you from reading your ſermons for a time. The chief inconvenience reſpecting yourſelf is that which you mention. A written ſermon is ſomething to lean upon; but it is beſt for a preacher to lean wholly upon the Lord. But ſet off gradually; the Lord will not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things: pray heartily that your *ſpirit* may be right with him, and then all the reſt will be well. And keep on writing: if you compoſe one ſermon, and ſhould find your heart enlarged to preach another, ſtill your labour of writing will not be loſt. If your conſcience bears you witneſs that you deſire to ſerve the Lord, his promiſe (now he has brought you into the miniſtry) of a ſufficiency and ability for the work belongs to you as much as to another. Your borrowing help from others may ariſe from a diffidence of yourſelf, which is not blameable; but it may ariſe in part likewiſe from a diffidence of the Lord, which is hurtful. I wiſh you may get encouragement from that word, Exodus, iv. 11. 12. It was a great encouragement to me. While I would

would preſs you to diligence in every rational means for the improvement of your ſtock in knowledge, and your ability of utterance, I would have you remember, that preaching is a *gift*. It cannot be learned by induſtry and imitation only, as a man may learn to make a chair or a table: it comes from above; and if you patiently wait upon God, he will beſtow this gift upon you, and increaſe it in you. It will grow by exerciſe. To him that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundantly. And be chiefly ſolicitous to obtain an unction upon what you *do* ſay Perhaps thoſe ſermons in which you feel yourſelf moſt deficient, may be made moſt uſeful to others. I hope you will endeavour likewiſe to be plain and familiar in your language and manner, (though not low or vulgar), ſo as to ſuit yourſelf as much as poſſible to the apprehenſions of the moſt ignorant people. There are in all congregations ſome perſons exceedingly ignorant; yet they have precious ſouls, and the Lord often calls ſuch. I pray the Lord to make you wiſe to win ſouls. I hope he will. You cannot be too jealous of your own heart; but let not ſuch inſtances as Mr ——— diſcourage you. Cry to him who is able to hold you up, that you may be ſafe, and you ſhall not cry in vain. It is indeed an alarming thought, that a man may pray and preach, be uſeful and acceptable for a time, and yet be nothing. But ſtill the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure. I have a good hope, that I ſhall never have cauſe to repent the part I have taken in your concerns. While you keep in the path of duty, you will find it the path of ſafety. Be punctual in waiting upon God in ſecret. This is the life of every thing, the only way, and the ſure way, of maintaining and renewing your ſtrength.

I am, &c.

EIGHT

EIGHT

LETTERS

TO

THE REV. MR ——.

LETTER I.

Dear Sir, *June* 29. 1757.

I Endeavour to be mindful of you in my prayers, that you may find both ſatisfaction and ſucceſs, and that the Lord himſelf may be your light, to diſcover to you every part of your duty. I would earneſtly preſs you and myſelf to be followers of thoſe who have been followers of Chriſt; to aim at a life of ſelf-denial; to renounce ſelf-will, and to guard againſt ſelf-wiſdom. The leſs we have to do with the world the better; and, even in converſing with our brethren, we have been, and unleſs we watch and pray ſhall often be, enſnared. Time is precious, and opportunities once gone are gone for ever. Even by reading, and what we call ſtudying, we may be comparatively loſers. The ſhorter way is to be cloſely waiting upon God in humble, ſecret, fervent prayer. The treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are in his hands; and he gives bountifully, without upbraiding. On the other hand, whatever we may undertake with a ſincere deſire to promote his glory, we may comfortably purſue: nothing is trivial that is done for him. In this view, I would have you, at proper intervals, purſue your ſtudies, eſpecially at thoſe times when you are unfit for better work. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to break through the ſnares of vanity that lie in my way; that I may be crucified with Chriſt, and live a hidden life by faith in him who loved me and gave himſelf for me.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER II.

Dear Sir, *Auguſt* 31. 1757.

I Wiſh you much of that ſpirit which was in the Apoſtle, which made him content to become all things to all men, that he might gain ſome. I am perſuaded, that love and humility are the higheſt attainments in the ſchool of Chriſt, and the brighteſt evidences that he is indeed our maſter. If any ſhould ſeem inclined to treat you with leſs regard, becauſe you are or have been a Methodiſt teacher, you will find forbearance, meekneſs, and long-ſuffering, the moſt prevailing means to conquer their prejudices. Our Lord has not only taught us to expect perſecution from the world, though this alone is a trial too hard for fleſh and blood; but we muſt look for what is much more grievous to a renewed mind, to be in ſome reſpects ſlighted, cenſured, and miſunderſtood, even by our Chriſtian brethren; and that, perhaps, in caſes where we are really ſtriving to promote the glory of God and the good of ſouls, and cannot, without the reproach of our conſciences, alter our conduct, however glad we ſhould be to have their approbation. Therefore we are required, not only to reſiſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil, but likewiſe to bear one another's burdens; which plainly intimates there will be ſomething to be borne with on all hands; and happy indeed is he that is not offended. You may obſerve what unjuſt reports and ſurmiſes were received, even at Jeruſalem, concerning the Apoſtle Paul; and it ſeems he was condemned unheard, and that by many thouſands too, Acts, xxi. 20. 21.; but we do not find he was at all ruffled, or that he ſought to retort any thing upon

upon them, though doubtleſs, had he been ſo diſpoſed, he might have found ſomething to have charged them with in his turn; but he calmly and willingly complied with every thing in his power to ſoften and convince them. Let us be followers of this pattern, ſo far as he was a follower of Chriſt; for even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf. How did he bear with the miſtakes, weakneſs, intemperate zeal, and imprudent propoſals, of his diſciples while on earth; and how does he bear with the ſame things from you and me, and every one of his followers now? and do we, can we, think much to bear with each other for his ſake? Have we all a full remiſſion of ten thouſand talents which we owed him, and were utterly unable to pay, and do we wrangle amongſt ourſelves for a few pence? God forbid!

If you ſhould be numbered among the regular Independents, I adviſe you not to offend any of them by unneceſſary ſingularities. I wiſh you not to part with any truth, or with any thing really expedient; but if the omitting any thing of an indifferent nature will obviate prejudices, and increaſe a mutual confidence, why ſhould not ſo eaſy a ſacrifice be made? Above all, my dear friend, let us keep cloſe to the Lord in a way of prayer: he giveth wiſdom that is profitable to direct; he is the wonderful counſellor; there is no teacher like him. Why do the living ſeek to the dead? why do we weary our friends and ourſelves, in running up and down, and turning over books for advice? If we ſhut our eyes upon the world and worldly things, and raiſe our thoughts upwards in humility and ſilence, ſhould we not often hear the ſecret voice of the Spirit of God whiſpering to our hearts, and pointing out to us the way of truth and peace? Have we not often gone aſtray, and hurt either ourſelves or our brethren,

for

for want of attending to this divine inſtruction? Have we not ſometimes mocked God, by pretending to aſk direction from him, when we had fixed our determination beforehand? It is a great bleſſing to know that we are ſincere; and next to this, to be convinced of our inſincerity, and to pray againſt it.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir, *November* 21. 1757.

CAN you forgive ſo negligent a correſpondent? I am indeed aſhamed; but (if that is any good excuſe) I uſe you no worſe than my other friends. Whenever I write, I am obliged to begin with an apology; for what with buſineſs, and the incidental duties of every day, my time is always mortgaged before it comes into my hands, eſpecially as I have ſo little ſkill in redeeming and improving it. I long to hear from you, and I long to ſee you; and indeed, from the terms of yours, I expected you here before this; which has been partly a cauſe of my delay. I have miſlaid your letter, and cannot remember the particulars; in general, I remember you were well, and going on comfortably in your work; which was matter of joy to me; and my poor prayers are for you, that the Lord may own and proſper you more and more. The two great points we are called to purſue in this ſinful divided world, are peace and holineſs: I hope you are much in the ſtudy of them. Theſe are the peculiar characteriſtics of a diſciple of Jeſus; they are the richeſt part of the enjoyments of heaven; and

and ſo far as they are received into the heart, they bring down heaven upon earth; and they are more inſeparably connected between themſelves than ſome of us are aware of. The longer I live, the more I ſee of the vanity and the ſinfulneſs of our unchriſtian diſputes: they eat up the very vitals of religion. I grieve to think how often I have loſt my time and my temper that way, in preſuming to regulate the vineyards of others, when I have neglected my own; when the beam in my own eye has ſo contracted my ſight, that I could diſcern nothing but the mote in my neighbour's. I am now deſirous to chuſe a better part. Could I ſpeak the publican's words with a proper feeling, I wiſh not for the tongue of men or angels to fight about notions or ſentiments. I allow that every branch of goſpel-truth is precious, that errors are abounding, and that it is our duty to bear an honeſt teſtimony to what the Lord has enabled us to find comfort in, and to inſtruct with meekneſs ſuch as are willing to be inſtructed; but I cannot ſee it my duty, nay, I believe it would be my ſin, to attempt to beat my notions into other people's heads. Too often I have attempted it in time paſt; but I now judge, that both my zeal and my weapons were carnal. When our dear Lord queſtioned Peter, after his fall and recovery, he ſaid not, Art thou wiſe, learned, and eloquent? nay, he ſaid not, Art thou clear, and ſound, and orthodox? but this only, "Loveſt thou me?" An anſwer to this was ſufficient then, why not now? Any other anſwer we may believe would have been inſufficient then. If Peter had made the moſt pompous confeſſion of his faith and ſentiments, ſtill the firſt queſtion would have recurred, "Loveſt thou me?" This is a ſcripture-precedent. Happy the preacher, whoever he be, my heart and my prayers are with him, who can honeſtly and ſteadily appropriate Peter's anſwer.

anſwer. Such a man, I ſay, I am ready to hear, though he ſhould be as much miſtaken in ſome points as Peter afterwards appears to have been in others. What a pity it is, that Chriſtians in ſucceeding ages ſhould think the conſtraining force of the love of Chriſt too weak, and ſuppoſe the end better anſwered by forms, ſubſcriptions, and queſtions of their own deviſing! I cannot acquit even thoſe churches who judge themſelves neareſt the primitive rule in this reſpect: alas! will-worſhip and preſumption may creep into the beſt external forms. But the misfortune both in churches and private Chriſtians is, that we are too prone rather to compare ourſelves with others, than to judge by the ſcriptures; and while each can ſee that they give not into the errors and miſtakes of the oppoſite party, both are ready to conclude that they are right: and thus it happens, that an attachment to a ſuppoſed goſpel-order will recommend a man ſooner and farther to ſome churches, than an eminency of goſpel-practice. I hope you will beware of ſuch a ſpirit whenever you publicly aſſume the Independent character: this, like a worm at the root, has nipt the graces, and hindered the uſefulneſs of many a valuable man; and thoſe who change ſides and opinions are the moſt liable to it. For the pride of our heart inſenſibly prompts us to caſt about far and near for arguments to juſtify our own behaviour, and makes us too ready to hold the opinions we have taken up to the very extreme, that thoſe amongſt whom we are newly come may not ſuſpect our ſincerity. In a word, let us endeavour to keep cloſe to God, to be much in prayer, to watch carefully over our hearts, and leave the buſy warm ſpirits to make the beſt of their work. The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and that wait on him continually; to theſe he will ſhew his covenant, not notionally, but experimentally.

tally. A few minutes of the Spirit's teaching will furniſh us with more real uſeful knowledge, than toiling through whole folios of commentators and expoſitors: they are uſeful in their places, and are not to be undervalued by thoſe who can perhaps in general do better without them; but it will be our wiſdom to deal leſs with the ſtreams, and be more cloſe in applying to the fountain-head. The ſcripture itſelf, and the ſpirit of God, are the beſt and the only ſufficient expoſitors of ſcripture. Whatever men have valuable in their writings, they got it from hence; and the way is as open to us as to any of them. There is nothing required but a teachable humble ſpirit; and learning, as it is commonly called, is not neceſſary in order to this. I commend you to the grace of God, and remain

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir, *January* 10. 1760.

I Have procured Cennick's ſermons;—they are in my judgement *ſound* and *ſweet*. O that you and I had a double portion of that ſpirit and unction which is in them! Come, let us not deſpair; the fountain is as full and as free as ever;—precious fountain, ever flowing with blood and water, milk and wine. This is the ſtream that heals the wounded, refreſhes the weary, ſatisfies the hungry, ſtrengthens the weak, and confirms the ſtrong; it opens the eyes of the blind, ſoftens the heart of ſtone, teaches the dumb to ſing, and enables the lame and paralytic to walk, to leap, to run, to fly, to mount up with eagle's wings: a taſte of this ſtream raiſes

earth to heaven, and brings down heaven upon earth. Nor is it a fountain only; it is a univerſal bleſſing, and aſſumes a variety of ſhapes to ſuit itſelf to our wants. It is a ſun, a ſhield, a garment, a ſhade, a banner, a refuge: it is bread, the true bread, the very ſtaff of life: it is life itſelf, immortal, eternal life!

The croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, my Lord,
Is food and medicine, ſhield and ſword.

Take that for your motto; wear it in your heart; keep it in your eye; have it often in your mouth, till you can find ſomething better. The croſs of Chriſt is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge combined. Bleſſed be God! there is neither prohibition nor flaming ſword to keep us back, but it ſtands like a tree by the highway ſide, which affords its ſhade to every paſſenger without diſtinction. Watch and pray. We live in a ſifting time: error gains ground every day. May the name and love of our Saviour Jeſus keep us and all his people. Either write or come very ſoon to

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir, *November* 15. 1760.

IF your viſit ſhould be delayed, let me have a letter. I want either good news or good advice; to hear that *your* ſoul proſpers, or to receive ſomething that may quicken *my own*. The Apoſtle ſays, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt:" alas! we know how to ſay ſomething about

about it, but how faint and feeble are our real perceptions of it! Our love to him is the proof and meaſure of what we know of his love to us. Surely then we are mere children in this kind of knowledge, and every other kind is vain. What ſhould we think of a man who ſhould neglect his buſineſs, family, and all the comforts of life, that he might ſtudy the Chineſe language; though he knows beforehand he ſhould never be able to attain it, nor ever find occaſion or opportunity to uſe it? The purſuit of every branch of knowledge that is not cloſely connected with the one thing needful is no leſs ridiculous.

You know ſomething of our friend Mrs B——. She has been more than a month confined to her bed, and I believe her next remove will be to her coffin. The Lord has done great things for her. Though ſhe has been a ſerious exemplary perſon all her life, when the proſpect of death preſented, ſhe began to cry out earneſtly, "What ſhall I do to be "ſaved?" But her ſolicitude is at an end; ſhe has ſeen the ſalvation of God, and now for the moſt part rejoices in ſomething more than hope. This you will account good news, I am ſure. Let it be your encouragement and mine. The Lord's arm is not ſhortened, nor is his preſence removed; he is near us ſtill, though we perceive him not. May he guide you with his eye in all your public and private concerns, and may he in particular bleſs our communications to our mutual advantage.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir, *July* 29. 1761.

ARE the quarrels made up? Tell thoſe who know what communion with Jeſus is worth, that they will never be able to maintain it, if they give way to the workings of pride, jealouſy, and anger. This will provoke the Lord to leave them dry; to command the clouds of his grace that they rain no rain upon them. Theſe things are ſure ſigns of a low frame, and a ſure way to keep it ſo. Could they be prevailed upon, from a ſenſe of the pardoning love of God to their own ſouls, to forgive each other as the Lord forgives us, freely, fully, without condition and without reſerve, they would find this like breaking down a ſtone wall, which has hitherto ſhut up their prayers from the Lord's ears, and ſhut out his bleſſing from filling their hearts. Tell them, I hope to hear that all animoſities, little and big, are buried by mutual conſent in the Redeemer's grave. Alas! the people of God have enemies enough: Why then will they weaken their own hands? Why will they help their enemies to pull down the Lord's work? Why will they grieve thoſe who wiſh them well, cauſe the weak to ſtumble, the wicked to rejoice, and bring a reproach upon their holy profeſſion. Indeed this is no light matter; I wiſh it may not lead them to ſomething worſe; I wiſh they may be wiſe in time, leſt Satan gains further advantage over them, and draw them to ſomething that ſhall make them (as David did) roar under the pains of broken bones. But I muſt break off. May God give you wiſdom, faithfulneſs, and patience: Take care that you do not catch an angry ſpirit yourſelf,

while

while you aim to ſuppreſs it in others: this will ſpoil all, and you will exhort, adviſe, and weep in vain. May you rather be an example and pattern to the flock: and in this view be not ſurpriſed if you yourſelf meet ſome hard uſage; rather rejoice, that you will thereby have an opportunity to exemplify your own rules, and to convince your people, that what you recommend to them you do not ſpeak by *rote*, but from the experience of your heart. One end why our Lord was tempted was for the encouragement of his poor followers, that they might know him to be a High Prieſt ſuited to them, having had a fellow-feeling in their diſtreſſes. For the like reaſon he appoints his miniſters to be ſorely exerciſed both from without and within, that they may ſympathize with their flock, and know in their own hearts the deceitfulneſs of ſin, the infirmities of the fleſh, and the way in which the Lord ſupports and bears with all that truſt him. Therefore be not diſcouraged; uſefulneſs and trials, comforts and croſſes, ſtrength and exerciſe go together. But remember he has ſaid, "I will never leave thee nor "forſake thee; be thou faithful unto death, and I "will give thee a crown of life." When you get to heaven, you will not complain of the way by which the Lord brought you. Farewell. Pray for us.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

Dear Sir, *Dec.* 14. 1761.

I Pray the Lord to accompany you; but cannot help fearing you go on too faſt. If you have not (as I am ſure you ought not) made an abſolute promiſe, but only conditional, you need not be ſo ſolicitous; depend upon it, when the Lord is pleaſed to remove you, he will ſend one to ſupply your place. I am grieved that your mind is ſo ſet upon a ſtep, which I fear will occaſion many inconveniencies to a people who have deſerved your beſt regard. Others may ſpeak you fairer, but none wiſhes you better than myſelf; therefore I hope you allow me to ſpeak my mind plainly, and believe that it is no pleaſure to me to oppoſe your inclinations. As to your ſaying they will take no denial, it has no weight with me. Had they aſked what you were exceedingly averſe to, you would ſoon have expreſſed yourſelf ſo as to convince them it was to no purpoſe to urge you; but they ſaw ſomething in your manner or language that encouraged them; they ſaw the propoſal was agreeable to you, that you were not at all unwilling to exchange your old friends for new ones; and this is the reaſon they would take no denial. If you ſhould live to ſee thoſe who are moſt forward in preſſing you become the firſt to diſcourage you, you will think ſeriouſly of my words.

If I thought my advice would prevail, it ſhould be this: Call the people together, and deſire them (if poſſible) to forget you ever intended to depart from them; and promiſe not to think of a removal, till the Lord ſhall make your way ſo clear, that even they ſhall have nothing reaſonable to object againſt

againſt it. You may keep your word with your other friends too; for when a proper perſon ſhall offer, as likely to pleaſe and ſatisfy the people as yourſelf, I will give my hearty conſent to your removal.

Conſider what it is you would have in your office, but maintenance, acceptance, and ſucceſs. Have you not thoſe where you are? Are you ſure of having them where you are going? Are you ſure the Spirit of God (without which you will do nothing) will be with you there, as he has been with you hitherto? Perhaps if you act in your own ſpirit, you may find as great a change as Sampſon. I am ready to weep when I think what difficulties were ſurmounted to accompliſh your ordination; and now when the people thought themſelves fixed, that you ſhould ſo ſoon diſappoint them.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Dear Sir, *Feb.* 15. 1762.

I Have been often thinking of you ſince your removal, and was glad to receive your letter today. I hope you will ſtill go on to find more and more encouragement to believe, that the Lord has diſpoſed and led you to the ſtep you have taken. For though I wrote with the greateſt plainneſs and earneſtneſs, and would if in my power have prevented it while under deliberation, yet, now it is done and paſt recall, I would rather help than diſhearten you. Indeed, I cannot ſay that my view of the affair is yet altered. The beſt way not to be caſt down hereafter, is not to be too ſanguine at firſt.

You know there is ſomething pleaſing in novelty; as yet you are new to them, and they to you: I pray God that you may find as cordial a regard from them as at preſent, when you have been with them as many years as in the place you came from. And if you have grace to be watchful and prayful, all will be well; for we ſerve a gracious Maſter, who knows how to over-rule even our miſtakes to his glory and our own advantage. Yet I obſerve that when we do wrong, ſooner or later we ſmart for our indiſcretion; perhaps many years afterwards. After we have ſeen and confeſſed our fault, and reeeived repeated proofs of pardoning love, as to the guilt, yet chaſtiſement, to remind us more ſenſibly of our having done amiſs, will generally find us out. So it was with David in the matter of Uriah: the Lord put away his ſin, healed his broken bones, and reſtored unto him the light of his countenance; yet many troubles, in conſequence of this affair, followed one upon another, till at length (many years afterwards) he was driven from Jeruſalem by his own ſon. So it was with Jacob: he dealt deceitfully with his brother Eſau; notwithſtanding this the Lord appeared to him and bleſſed him, gave him comfortable promiſes, and revealed himſelf to him from time to time; yet after an interval of twenty years his fault was brought afreſh to his remembrance, and his heart trembled within him when he heard his brother was coming with armed men to meet him. And thus I have found it in my own experience: things which I had forgotten a long while have been brought to my mind by providential diſpenſations which I little expected; but the firſt riſe of which I have been able to trace far back, and forced to confeſs, that the Lord is indeed He that judgeth the heart and trieth the reins. I hint this for your caution: you know beſt upon what grounds you have proceeded; but if, (though

I do not affirm it, I hope otherwiſe), I ſay, if you have acted too much in your own ſpirit, been too haſty and precipitate; if you have not been ſufficiently tender of your people, nor thoughtful of the conſequences which your departure will probably involve them in; if you were impatient under the Lord's hand, and inſtead of waiting his time and way of removing the trials and difficulties you found, you have ventured upon an attempt to free and mend yourſelf: I ſay, if any of theſe things have mixed with your determinations, ſomething will fall out to ſhew you your fault: either you will not find the ſucceſs you hope for, or friends will grow cold, or enemies and difficulties you dream not of will preſent themſelves, or your own mind will alter, ſo as what ſeems now moſt pleaſing will afford you little pleaſure. Yet though I write thus, I do not mean (as I ſaid before) to diſcourage you, but that you may be forewarned, humble, and watchful. If you ſhould at any time have a different view of things, you may take comfort from the inſtances I have mentioned. The trials of David and Jacob were ſharp; but they were ſhort, and they proved to their advantage, put them upon acts of humiliation and prayer, and ended in a double bleſſing. Nothing can harm us that quickens our earneſtneſs and frequency in applying to a throne of grace: only truſt the Lord and keep cloſe to him, and all that befalls you ſhall be for good. Temptations end in victory; troubles prove an increaſe of conſolation; yea, our very falls and failings tend to increaſe our ſpiritual wiſdom, to give us a greater knowledge of Satan's devices, and make us more habitually upon our guard againſt them. Happy caſe of the believer in Jeſus! when bitten by the fiery ſerpent he needs not go far for a remedy; he has only to look to a bleeding Saviour, and be healed.

I think one great advantage that attends a removal into a new place is, that it gives an eaſy opportunity of forming a new plan, and breaking off any little habits which we have found inconvenient, and yet perhaps could not ſo readily lay aſide, where our cuſtoms and acquaintance had been long formed. I earneſtly recommend to you to reflect, if you cannot recollect ſome things which you have hitherto omitted, which may properly be now taken up; ſome things formerly allowed, which may now with eaſe and convenience be laid aſide. I only give the hint in general; for I have nothing in particular to charge you with. I recommend to you to be very choice of your time, eſpecially the fore part of the day: let your morning hours be devoted to prayer, reading, and ſtudy; and ſuffer not the importunity of friends to rob you of the hours before noon, without a juſt neceſſity: and if you accuſtom yourſelf to riſe early in the morning, you will find a great advantage. Be careful to avoid loſing your thoughts, whether in books or otherwiſe, upon any ſubjects which are not of a direct ſubſerviency to your great deſign, till towards dinner-time: the afternoon is not ſo favourable to ſtudy; this is a proper time for paying and receiving viſits, converſing among your friends, or unbending with a book of inſtructive entertainment, ſuch as hiſtory, &c. which may increaſe your general knowledge, without a great confinement of your attention; but let the morning hours be ſacred. I think you would likewiſe find advantage in uſing your pen more: write ſhort notes upon the ſcriptures you read, or tranſcribe the labours of others; make extracts from your favourite authors, eſpecially thoſe who, beſides a fund of ſpiritual and evangelical matter, have a happy talent of expreſſing their thoughts in a clear and lively, or pathetic manner: you would find a continued exerciſe in this way would be

be greatly uſeful to form your own ſtyle, and help your delivery and memory; you would become inſenſibly maſter of their thoughts, and find it more eaſy to expreſs yourſelf juſtly and clearly: what we only read we eaſily loſe; but what we commit to paper is not ſo ſoon forgot. Eſpecially remember, (what you well know, but we cannot too often remind each other), that frequent ſecret prayer is the life of all we do. If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, and it ſhall be given; but all our diligence will fail, if we are remiſs in this particular. I am glad it is not thought neceſſary for you to go to London on this occaſion. I hope you will not think it neceſſary upon any other account. Rather keep cloſe to the work you have undertaken; and endeavour to avoid any thing that looks like oſtentation, or a deſire to be taken notice of. You ſee I adviſe you with the freedom of a friend who loves you, and longs to ſee your work and your ſoul proſper.

You will, I doubt not, endeavour to promote the practice of frequent prayer in the houſes that receive you. I look upon prayer meetings as the moſt profitable exerciſes (excepting the public preaching) in which Chriſtians can engage: they have a direct tendency to kill a worldly trifling ſpirit, to draw down a divine bleſſing upon all our concerns, compoſe differences, and enkindle (at leaſt to maintain) the flame of divine love amongſt brethren. But I need not tell you the advantages; you know them; I only would exhort you; and the rather as I find in my own caſe the principal cauſe of my leanneſs and unfruitfulneſs is owing to an unaccountable backwardneſs to pray. I can write, or read, or converſe, or hear, with a ready will; but prayer is more ſpiritual and inward than any of theſe; and the more ſpiritual any duty is, the more my carnal heart is apt to ſtart from it.

May the Lord pour forth his precious ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication in both our hearts.

I am not well pleaſed with the account you give of ſo many dry bones. It increaſes my wonder, that you could ſo readily exchange ſo much plump fleſh and blood as you had about you for a parcel of ſkeletons. I wiſh they may not haunt you, and diſturb your peace. I wiſh theſe ſame dry bones do not prove thorns in your ſides and in your eyes. You ſay, now you have to pray, and propheſy, and wait for the four winds to come and put life into theſe bones. God grant that your prayers may be anſwered: but if I knew a man who poſſeſſed a field in a tolerable ſoil, which had afforded him ſome increaſe every year; and if this man, after having beſtowed ſeven years labour in cultivating, weeding, manuring, fencing, &c. juſt when he has brought his ground (in his neighbour's judgement) into good order, and might reaſonably hope for larger crops than he had ever yet ſeen, ſhould ſuddenly forego all his advantages, leave his good ſeed for the birds to eat, pull up the young fences which coſt him ſo much pains to plant, and all this for the ſake of making a new experiment upon the top of a mountain; though I might heartily wiſh him great ſucceſs, I could not honeſtly give him great encouragement. You have parted with that for a trifle, which in my eyes ſeems an ineſtimable jewel; I mean the hearts and affections of an enlightened people. This appears to me one of the greateſt honours and greateſt pleaſures a faithful miniſter can poſſeſs, and which many faithful and eminent miniſters have never been able to obtain. This gave you a vaſt advantage; your gift was more acceptable there than that of any other perſon, and more than you will probably find elſewhere. For I cannot make a compariſon between the haſty approbation of a few, whoſe eyes are but beginning

to

to open, and their affections and paſſions warm, ſo that they muſt, if poſſible, have the man that firſt catches their attention; I ſay, I cannot think this worthy to be compared to the regard of a people who underſtood the goſpel, were able to judge of men and doctrines, and had trial of you for ſo many years. It is indeed much to your honour (it proves that you were faithful, diligent, and exemplary) that the people proved ſo attached to you; but that you ſhould force yourſelf from them, when they ſo dearly loved you, and ſo much needed you, this has made all your friends in theſe parts to wonder, and your enemies to rejoice; and I, alas! know not what to anſwer in your behalf to either. Say not, "I hate this Micaiah, for he propheſies not good "of me, but evil;" but allow me the privilege of a friend. My heart is full when I think of what has happened, and what will probably be the conſequence. In few words, I am ſtrongly perſuaded you have taken an unadviſed ſtep, and would therefore prepare you for the inconvenience and uneaſineſs you may probably meet with. And if I am (as I deſire I may prove) miſtaken, my advice will do no harm; you will want ſomething to balance the careſſes and ſucceſs you meet with.

We ſhould be very glad to ſee you, and hope you will take your meaſures when you do come to lengthen your uſual ſtay, in proportion to the difference of the diſtance. Pray for us.

I am, &c.

FOUR

FOUR
LETTERS
TO
MRS P——.

FOUR
LETTERS
TO
Mrs P——

LETTER I.

My dear Madam, *May* — 1774.

I Have had ſudden notice, that I may ſend you a haſty line, to expreſs our ſatisfaction in hearing that you had a ſafe, though perilous journey. I hope I ſhall be always mindful to pray, that the Lord may guide, bleſs, and comfort you, and give you ſuch a manifeſtation of his perſon, power, and grace, as may ſet you at liberty from all fear, and fill you with abiding peace and joy in believing. Remember that Jeſus has all power, the fullneſs of compaſſion, and embraces with open arms all that come to him for life and ſalvation.

I know not whether Mrs ———'s illneſs was before or ſince my laſt. Through mercy ſhe is better again; and I remain ſo, though death and illneſs are ſtill walking about the town. O for grace to take warning by the ſufferings of others, and ſet looſe to the world, and ſo number our days as to incline our hearts to the one thing needful! Indeed that one thing includes many things, ſufficient to engage the beſt of our thoughts and the moſt of our time, if we were duly ſenſible of their importance; but I may adopt the Pſalmiſt's expreſſion, "My ſoul cleaveth to the duſt." How is it that the truths of which I have the moſt undoubted conviction, and which are of all others the moſt weighty, ſhould make ſo little impreſſion upon me? O I know the cauſe! It is deeply rooted. An evil nature cleaves to me; ſo that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. It is, however, a mercy to be made ſenſible of it, and in any meaſure

ſure humbled for it. Ere long it will be dropped in the grave; then all complaints ſhall ceaſe. That thought gives relief. I ſhall not always live this poor dying life: I hope one day to be all ear, all heart, all tongue: when I ſhall ſee the Redeemer as he is, I ſhall be like him. This will be a heaven indeed, to behold his glory without a veil, to rejoice in his love without a cloud, and to ſing his praiſes, without one jarring or wandering note, for ever. In the mean time, may he enable us to ſerve him with our beſt. O that every power, faculty, and talent, were devoted to him! He deſerves all we have, and ten thouſand times more if we had it; for he has loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. He gave himſelf for us. In one ſenſe we are well ſuited to anſwer his purpoſe; for if we were not vile and worthleſs beyond expreſſion, the exceeding riches of his grace would not have been ſo glorioufly diſplayed. His glory ſhines more in redeeming one ſinner, than in preſerving a thouſand angels. Poor Mr —— is ſtill in the dark valley, but we truſt prayer ſhall yet bring him out. Mighty things have been done in anſwer to prayer, and the Lord's arm is not ſhortened, neither is his ear heavy. It is our part to wait till we have an anſwer. One of his own hymns ſays,

The promiſe may be long deferr'd,
But never comes too late.

I ſuppoſe you have heard of the death of Mr T——— of R——. This is apparently a heavy blow. He was an amiable, judicious, candid man, and an excellent preacher in a great ſphere of uſefulneſs; and his age and conſtitution gave hopes that he might have been eminently ſerviceable for many years. How often does the Lord write Vanity upon

upon all our expectations from men! He viſited a perſon ill of a putrid fever, and carried the ſeeds of infection with him to London, where he died. Mrs ——— is a very excellent and accompliſhed woman, but exceedingly delicate in her frame and ſpirits. How can ſhe bear ſo ſudden and ſevere a ſtroke! But yet I hope ſhe will afford a proof of the Lord's all-ſufficiency and faithfulneſs. O Madam, the Lord our God is a great God! If he frowns, the ſmiles of the whole creation can afford no comfort; and if he is pleaſed to ſmile, he can enable the ſoul under the darkeſt diſpenſations to ſay, All is well. Yet the fleſh will feel, and it ought; otherwiſe the exerciſe of faith, patience, and reſignation would be impracticable. I have loſt in him one of my moſt valued and valuable friends: but what is my loſs to that of his people!

The Lord bleſs you and keep you. The Lord increaſe you more and more, you and your children. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you his peace. I thank him for leading you to us, but eſpecially for making your viſit there in any meaſure agreeable and profitable to yourſelf. If I have been an inſtrument in his hand for your comfort, I have reaſon to remember it among the greateſt favours he has conferred upon me. And now, dear Madam, once more farewell. If the Lord ſpares our lives, I hope we ſhall ſee each other again upon earth. But above all, let us rejoice in the bleſſed goſpel, by which immortality is brought to light, and a glorious proſpect opened beyond the grave.

There ſits our Saviour thron'd in light,
Cloth'd with a body like our own.

There at leaſt, after all the changes and trials of this ſtate, we ſhall meet to part no more.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER II.

My dear Madam, 1775.

I Should have been more uneaſy at being prevented writing immediately, had I any reaſon to apprehend my advice neceſſary upon the point you propoſe, which by this time I ſuppoſe is ſettled as it ſhould be without me. I ſmiled at Miſs M——'s diſappointment. However, if the Lord favours her with a taſte for the library of my propoſing, ſhe will be like the merchantman ſeeking goodly pearls, and will count all other books but pebbles in compariſon of thoſe four volumes, which preſent us with ſomething new and important whenever we look into them. I ſhall be much obliged to her if ſhe will commit the third chapter of Proverbs to her memory, and I ſhall pray the Lord to write it in her heart.

You ſurpriſe me when you tell me, that the incident of my birth-day was noticed by thoſe I never ſaw. Be ſo good as to return my thanks to my unknown friends, and tell them, that I pray our common Lord and Saviour to bleſs them abundantly. His people while here are ſcattered abroad, ſeparated by hills and rivers, and too often by names and prejudices; but by and by we ſhall all meet where we ſhall all know and acknowledge each other, and rejoice together for evermore. I have lately read with much pleaſure, and I hope with ſome profit, the hiſtory of the Greenland Miſſion. Upon the whole it is a glorious work. None who love the Lord will refuſe to ſay, it is the finger of God indeed. For my own part, my ſoul rejoices in it; and I honour the inſtruments, as men who have hazarded their lives in an extra-

ordinary

ordinary manner for the ſake of the Lord Jeſus. Sure I am that none could have ſuſtained ſuch diſcouragements at firſt, or have obtained ſuch ſucceſs afterwards, unleſs the Lord had ſent, ſupported, and owned them.

I hope we ſhall have an intereſt in your prayers. I truſt the Lord is yet with us. We have ſome ripe for the ſickle, and ſome juſt ſpringing up; ſome tokens of his gracious preſence amongſt us; but ſin and Satan cut us out abundance of work as individuals, though through mercy as a ſociety we walk in peace.

The toad and ſpider is an exhibition of my daily experience. I am often wounded, but the Lord is my health. Still I am a living monument of mercy; and I truſt that word, "Becauſe I live you "ſhall live alſo," will carry me to the end. I am poor, weak, and fooliſh; but Jeſus is wiſe, ſtrong, and abounding in grace. He has given me a deſire to truſt my all in his hands, and he will not diſappoint the expectation which he himſelf has raiſed. At preſent I have but little to ſay, and but little time to ſay it in. When you think of this place, I hope you will think and believe, that you have friends here moſt cordially intereſted in your welfare, and often remembering you in prayer. May the Lord be your guide and ſhield, and give you the beſt deſires of your heart. I pray him to eſtabliſh and ſettle you in the great truths of his word. I truſt he will. We learn more, and more effectually, by one minute's communication with him through the medium of his written word, than we could from an aſſembly of divines, or a library of books.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER III.

My dear Madam, *Auguſt* 1775.

IT is not owing to forgetfulneſs that your letter has been thus long unanſwered. It has lain within my view this fortnight, demanding my firſt leiſure hour; but affairs of daily occurrence have been ſo many and ſo preſſing, that I have been conſtrained to put it off till now. I truſt the Lord, by his Spirit and providence, will direct and proſper the ſettlement of your children. I deſire my love to Miſs M——. My idea of her enlarges. Methinks I ſee her aſpiring to be as tall as her Mamma. I hope likewiſe that ſhe increaſes in grace and wiſdom as in years and ſtature; and that hearing our Lord's flock is a little flock, ſhe feels an earneſt thirſt to be one of the happy number which conſtitutes his fold.

There the Lord dwells amongſt them upon his own hill,
With the flocks all around him awaiting his will.

If ſhe has ſuch a deſire, I can tell who gave it her, for I am perſuaded it was not born with her; and where the good huſbandman ſows, there will he alſo reap. Therefore, dear Miſs M——, preſs forward: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you, for yet there is room. O what a fold! O what a paſture! O what a ſhepherd! Let us love, and ſing, and wonder.

I hope the good people at Briſtol, and every where elſe, are praying for our ſinful, diſtracted land, in this dark day. The Lord is angry, the ſword is drawn, and I am afraid nothing but the ſpirit of wreſtling prayer can prevail for the re-

turning

turning it into the ſcabbard. Could things have proceeded to theſe extremities, except the Lord had withdrawn his ſalutary bleſſing from both ſides? It is a time of prayer. We ſee the beginning of trouble, but who can foreſee the poſſible conſequences? The fire is kindled, but how far it may ſpread, thoſe who are above may perhaps know better than we. I meddle not with the diſputes of party, nor concern myſelf with any political maxims, but ſuch as are laid down in ſcripture. There I read that righteouſneſs exalteth a nation, and that ſin is the reproach, and if perſiſted in, the ruin of any people. Some people are ſtartled at the enormous ſum of our national debt: they who underſtand ſpiritual arithmetic, may be well ſtartled if they ſit down and compute the debt of national ſin. *Imprimis*, Infidelity: *Item*, Contempt of the goſpel: *Item*, The profligacy of manners: *Item*, Perjury: *Item*, The cry of blood, the blood of thouſands, perhaps millions, from the Eaſt Indies. It would take ſheets, yea quires, to draw out the particulars under each of theſe heads, and then much would remain untold. What can we anſwer, when the Lord ſaith, "Shall not I viſit for theſe things? Shall not my "ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Since we received the news of the firſt hoſtilities in America, we have had an additional prayer meeting. Could I hear that profeſſors in general, inſtead of waſting their breath in cenſuring men and meaſures, were plying the throne of grace, I ſhould ſtill hope for a reſpite. Poor New England! once the glory of the earth, now likely to be viſited with fire and ſword. They have left their firſt love, and the Lord is ſorely contending with them. Yet ſurely their ſins as a people are not to be compared with ours. I am juſt ſo much affected with theſe things as to know, that I am not affected enough. Oh! my ſpirit is ſadly cold and inſenſible, or I

ſhould

ſhould lay them to heart in a different manner: yet I endeavour to give the alarm as far as I can. There is one political maxim which comforts me, "the Lord reigns." His hand guides the ſtorm; and he knows them that are his, how to protect, ſupport, and deliver them. He will take care of his own cauſe, yea, he will extend his kingdom, even by theſe formidable methods. Men have one thing in view, he has another, and his counſel ſhall ſtand.

The chief piece of news ſince my laſt is concerning B. A. She has finiſhed her courſe, and is now with the great multitude, who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his teſtimony. Tueſday, the 1ſt of February, ſhe was in our aſſembly, was taken ill the next day, and died while we were aſſembled the Tueſday following. She had an eaſy diſſolution, retained her ſenſes and her ſpeech till the laſt minute, and went without a ſtruggle or a ſigh. She was not in raptures during her illneſs, but was compoſed, and maintained a ſtrong and lively faith. She had a numerous levee about her bed daily, who were all witneſſes to the power of faith, and to the faithfulneſs of the Lord, enabling her to triumph over the approaches of death; for ſhe was well known and well reſpected. She will be much miſſed; but I hope he will anſwer the many prayers ſhe put up for us, and raiſe up others in her room. "Bleſſed "are the dead who die in the Lord." Bleſſed are they who know whom they have believed, and when death comes can chearfully reſt their hopes on him who died that we might live. B —— had been long a precious and honourable woman; but her hope in the trying hour reſted not in what ſhe had done for the Lord, but upon what he had done for her; not upon the change his grace had wrought in her, but upon the righteouſneſs he had wrought

wrought out for her by his obedience unto death. This ſupported her; for ſhe ſaw nothing in herſelf but what ſhe was aſhamed of. She ſaw reaſon to renounce her own goodneſs, as well as her own ſins, as to the point of acceptance with God, and died as St Paul lived, determined to know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.

The time when Mr and Mrs C—— remove to Scotland drawing near, Mrs —— is gone to ſpend a week or two with them, and take her leave. She feels ſomething at parting with a ſiſter, who is indeed a valuable perſon; and from children they have always lived in the moſt tender intimacy and uninterrupted friendſhip. But all beneath the moon (like the moon itſelf) is ſubject to inceſſant change. Alterations and ſeparations are graciouſly appointed of the Lord, to remind us that this is not our reſt, and to prepare our thoughts for that approaching change which ſhall fix us for ever in an unchangeable ſtate. O Madam, what ſhall we poor worms render to him who has brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel, taken away the ſting of death, revealed a glorious proſpect beyond the grave, and given us eyes to ſee it? Now the reflection, that we muſt ere long take a final farewell of what is moſt capable of pleaſing us upon earth, is not only tolerable, but pleaſant. For we know we cannot fully poſſeſs our beſt friend, our chief treaſure, till we have done with all below: nay, we cannot till then properly ſee each other. We are caſed up in vehicles of clay, and converſe together as if we were in different coaches with the blinds cloſe drawn round. We ſee the carriage, and the voice tells us that we have a friend within: but we ſhall know each other better, when death ſhall open the coach-doors, and hand out the company ſucceſſively, and lead them into the glorious apartments which the Lord has appointed to be the com-

mon reſidence of them that love him. What an aſſembly will there be! What a conſtellation of glory, when each individual ſhall ſhine like the ſun in the kingdom of their Father! No ſins, ſorrows, temptations; no veils, clouds, or prejudices, ſhall interrupt us then. All names of idle diſtinction (the fruits of preſent remaining darkneſs, the channels of bigotry, and the ſtumbling-block of the world), will be at an end.

The deſcription you give of your preſent reſidence pleaſes me much, and chiefly becauſe it deſcribes and manifeſts to me ſomething ſtill more intereſting, I mean the peaceable ſituation of your mind. Had he placed you in an Eden ſome months ago, it would hardly have awakened your deſcriptive talent. But he whom the winds and ſeas obey has calmed your mind, and I truſt will go on to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. It is no great matter where we are, provided we ſee that the Lord has placed us there, and that he is with us.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

1776.

SO, my dear Madam, I hope we have found you out, and that this letter will reach you in good time to welcome you in our names to London. We are ready to take it for granted that you will now moſt certainly make us a viſit. Do come as ſoon, and ſtay as long as you poſſibly can. Methinks you will be glad to get out of the ſmell and noiſe as ſoon as poſſible. If we did not go to London now and then, we ſhould perhaps forget how people

people live there. Eſpecially I pity profeſſors; they are expoſed to as many dangers as people who live in mines; chilling damps, ſcorching blaſts, epidemical diſorders, owing to the impure air. Such are the winds of falſe doctrines, the exploſions of controverſy, the blights of worldly converſation, the contagion of evil cuſtom. In ſhort, a perſon had need have a good conſtitution of grace, and likewiſe to be well ſupplied with antidotes, to preſerve a tolerable ſhare of ſpiritual health in ſuch a ſituation.

And now, how ſhall I fill up the reſt of the paper? It is a ſhame for a Chriſtian and a miniſter to ſay he has no ſubject at hand, when the inexhauſtible theme of redeeming love is ever preſſing upon our attention. I will tell you then, though you know it, that the Lord reigns. He who once bore our ſins, and carried our ſorrows, is ſeated upon a throne of glory, and exerciſes all power in heaven and on earth. Thrones, principalities, and powers, bow before him. Every event in the kingdoms of providence and of grace are under his rule. His providence pervades and manages the whole, and is as minutely attentive to every part as if there were only that ſingle object in his view. From the talleſt archangel to the meaneſt ant or fly, all depend on him for their being, their preſervation, and their powers. He directs the ſparrows where to build their neſts, and to find their food. He overrules the riſe and fall of nations, and bends, with an invincible energy and unerring wiſdom, all events; ſo that while many intend nothing leſs, in the iſſue their deſigns all concur and coincide in the accompliſhment of his holy will. He reſtrains with a mighty hand the ſtill more formidable efforts of the powers of darkneſs; and Satan with all his hoſts cannot exert their malice a hair's-breadth beyond the limits of his permiſſion. This is he who

is the head and huſband of his believing people. How happy are they whom it is his good pleaſure to bleſs! How ſafe are they whom he has engaged to protect! How honoured and privileged are they to whom he is pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf, and whom he enables and warrants to claim him as their friend and their portion! Having redeemed them by his own blood, he ſets a high value upon them; he eſteems them his treaſure, his jewels, and keeps them as the pupil of his eye. They ſhall not want; they need not fear: his eye is upon them in every ſituation, his ear is open to their prayers, and his everlaſting arms are under them for their ſure ſupport. On earth he guides their ſteps, controuls their enemies, and directs all his diſpenſations for their good; while in heaven he is pleading their cauſe, preparing them a place, and communicating down to them reviving foretaſtes of the glory that ſhall be ſhortly revealed. O how is this myſtery hidden from an unbelieving world! Who can believe it, till it is made known by experience, what an intercourſe is maintained in this land of ſhadows between the Lord of glory and ſinful worms! How ſhould we praiſe him that he has viſited us; for we were once blind to his beauty, and inſenſible to his love, and ſhould have remained ſo to the laſt, had he not prevented us with his goodneſs, and been found of us when we ſought him not.

Mrs —— preſents her love. The bite of the leech which I mentioned to you has confined her to the houſe ever ſince; but I hope ſhe will be able to go out to-morrow. We were for a while apprehenſive of worſe conſequences; but the Lord is gracious: he ſhews us in a variety of inſtances what dependent creatures we are, how blind to events, and how eaſily the methods which we take to relieve ourſelves from a ſmall inconvenience may plunge us into a greater. Thus we learn (happy indeed

indeed if we can effectually learn it) that there is no ſafety but in his protection, and that nothing can do us good but by his bleſſing. As for myſelf, I ſee ſo many reaſons why he might contend with me, that I am amazed he affords me and mine ſo much peace, and appoints us ſo few trials. We live as upon a field of battle; many are hourly ſuffering and falling around us, and I can give no reaſon why we are preſerved, but that he is God, and not man. What a mercy that we are only truly known to him who is alone able to bear us!

May the Lord bleſs you and yours; may he comfort you, guide you, and guard you. Come quickly to

Yours, &c.

SIX
LETTERS
TO THE
REV. Mr B——.

LETTER I.

Rev. and Dear Sir, *Sept.* 14. 1765.

WHEN I was at London in June laſt your name firſt reached me, and from that time I have been deſirous to wiſh you ſucceſs in the name of the Lord. A few weeks ago I received a further account from Mrs ——, with a volume of your ſermons: ſhe likewiſe gave me a direction where to write, and an encouragement that a letter would not be unacceptable. The latter indeed I did not much need when I had read your book. Though we have no acquaintance, we are already united in the ſtricteſt ties of friendſhip, partakers of the ſame hope, ſervants of the ſame Lord, and in the ſame part of his vineyard: I therefore hold all apologies needleſs. I rejoice in the Lord's goodneſs to you; I pray for his abundant bleſſing upon your labours; I need an intereſt in your prayers; I have an affectionate deſire to know more concerning you: theſe are my motives for writing.

Mrs —— tells me that you have read my Narrative: I need not tell you, therefore, that I am one of the moſt aſtoniſhing inſtances of the forbearance and mercy of God upon the face of the earth. In the cloſe of it I mention a warm deſire I had to the miniſtry: this the Lord was pleaſed to keep alive for ſeveral years, through a ſucceſſion of views and diſappointments. At length his hour came, and my way was made eaſy. I have been here about fifteen months. The Lord has led me,

by a way that I little expected, to a pleaſant lot, where the goſpel has been many years known, and is highly valued by many. We have a large church and congregation, and a conſiderable number of lively thriving believers, and in general go on with great comfort and harmony. I meet with leſs oppoſition from the world than is uſual where the goſpel is preached. This burden was borne by Mr B—— for ten years, and in that courſe of time ſome of the fierceſt oppoſers were removed, ſome wearied, and ſome ſoftened; ſo that we are now remarkably quiet in that reſpect. May the Lord teach us to improve the privilege, and preſerve us from indifference. How unſpeakable are our obligations to the grace of God! What a privilege is it to be a believer! They are comparatively few, and we by nature were no nearer than others; it was grace, free grace, that made the difference. What an honour to be a miniſter of the everlaſting goſpel! Theſe upon compariſon are perhaps fewer ſtill. How wonderful that one of theſe few ſhould be ſought for among the wilds of Africa, reclaimed from the loweſt ſtate of impiety and miſery, and brought to aſſure other ſinners, from his own experience, that "there is, there is forgiveneſs with "him, that he may be feared." And you, Sir, though not left to give ſuch flagrant proofs of the wickedneſs of the heart and the power of Satan, yet owe your preſent views to the ſame almighty grace. If the Lord had not diſtinguiſhed you from your brethren, you would have been now in the character of a miniſter miſleading the people, and oppoſing thoſe precious truths you are now labouring to eſtabliſh. Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory! I ſhall be thankful to hear from you at your leiſure. Be pleaſed to inform me, whether you received the knowledge of the truth before or ſince you were in orders; how long

long you have preached the joyful ſound of ſalvation by Jeſus, and what is the ſtate of things in your parts.

We are called to an honourable ſervice, but it is arduous. What wiſdom does it require to keep the middle path in doctrines, avoiding the equally dangerous errors on the right hand and the left! What ſteadineſs, to ſpeak the truth boldly and faithfully in the midſt of a gainſaying world! What humility, to ſtand againſt the tide of popularity! What meekneſs, to endure all things for the elect's ſake, that they may be ſaved. "Who is ſufficient for "theſe things?" We are not in ourſelves, but there is an all-ſufficiency in Jeſus. Our enemy watches us cloſe; he challenges and deſires to have us, that he may ſift us as wheat; he knows he can eaſily ſhake us if we are left to ourſelves; but we have a ſhepherd, a keeper, who never ſlumbers nor ſleeps. If he permits us to be exerciſed, it is for our good; he is at hand to direct, moderate, and ſanctify every diſpenſation; he has prayed for us that our faith may not fail, and he has promiſed to maintain his fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from him. When we are prone to wander, he calls us back; when we ſay, my feet ſlip, his mercy holds us up; when we are wounded, he heals; when we are ready to faint, he revives. The people of God are ſure to meet with enemies, but eſpecially the miniſters: Satan bears them a double grudge: the world watches for their halting, and the Lord will ſuffer them to be afflicted, that they may be kept humble, that they may acquire a ſympathy with the ſufferings of others, that they may be experimentally qualified to adviſe and help them, and to comfort them with the comforts with which they themſelves have been comforted of God. But the captain of our ſalvation is with us; his eye is upon us, his everlaſting arm beneath us;

in his name therefore may we go on, lift up our banners, and ſay, "If God be for us who can be "againſt us? Nay, in all theſe things we are more "than conquerors, through him that has loved us." The time is ſhort: yet a little while, and he will wipe all tears from our eyes, and put a crown of life upon our heads with his own gracious hand. In this ſenſe, how beautiful are thoſe lines:

Temporis illius
Me conſolor imagine
Feſtis quum populus me reducem choris,
Fauſtiſque excipiet vocibus, et Dei
Pompa cum celebri, me comitabitur
Auguſta ad penetralia.

Buch. in Pſ. 42.

If any occaſions ſhould call you into theſe parts, my houſe and pulpit will be glad to receive you. Pray for us, dear Sir, and believe me to be

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

Very dear Sir, *November* 2. 1765.

YOur letter of the 4th ult. gave me great pleaſure. I thank you for the particular account you have favoured me with. I rejoice with you, ſympathiſe with you, and find my heart opened to correſpond with unreſerved freedom. May the Lord direct our pens, and help us to help each other. The work you are engaged in is great, and your difficulties many; but faithful is he that hath called you, who alſo will do it. The weapons which

which he has now put into your hands are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds. Men may fight, but they ſhall not prevail againſt us, if we are but enabled to put our cauſe ſimply into the Lord's hands, and keep ſteadily on in the path of duty. He will plead our cauſe, and fight our battles; he will pardon our miſtakes, and teach us to do better. My experience as a miniſter is but ſmall, having been but about eighteen months in the vineyard; but for about twelve years I have been favoured with an increaſing acquaintance among the people of God, of various ranks and denominations, which, together with the painful exerciſes of my own heart, gave me opportunity of making obſervations which were of great uſe to me when I entered upon the work myſelf: and ever ſince I have found the Lord graciouſly ſupplying new lights and new ſtrength, as new occurrences ariſe. So I truſt it will be with you. I endeavour to avail myſelf of the examples, advice, and ſentiments of my brethren, yet at the ſame time to guard againſt calling any man maſter. This is the peculiar of Chriſt. The beſt are but men; the wiſeſt may be miſtaken; and that which may be right in another might be wrong in me, through a difference of circumſtances. The Spirit of God diſtributes variouſly, both in gifts and diſpenſations; and I would no more be tied to act ſtrictly by others rules than to walk in ſhoes of the ſame ſize. My ſhoes muſt fit my own feet.

I endeavour to guard againſt extremes: our nature is prone to them: and we are liable likewiſe, when we have found the inconvenience of one extreme, to revert inſenſibly (ſometimes to fly ſuddenly) to the other. I pray to be led in the midſt of the path. I am what they call a Calviniſt; yet there are flights, niceties, and hard ſayings, to be found

found among ſome of that ſyſtem, which I do not chuſe to imitate. I diſlike thoſe ſentiments againſt which you have borne your teſtimony in the note at the end of your preface: but having known many precious ſouls in that party, I have been taught, that the kingdom of God is not in names and ſentiments, but in righteouſneſs, faith, love, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. I ſhould however upon ſome occaſions oppoſe thoſe tenets, if they had any prevalence in my neighbourhood; but they have not; and in general I believe the ſureſt way to refute or prevent error, is to preach the truth. I am glad to find you are aware of that ſpirit of enthuſiaſm which has ſo often broken looſe and blemiſhed hopeful beginnings, and that the foundation you build upon is ſolid and ſcriptural: this will I hope ſave you much trouble, and prevent many offences. Let us endeavour to make our people acquainted with the ſcripture, and to impreſs them with a high ſenſe of its authority, excellence, and ſufficiency. Satan ſeldom remarkably impoſes on miniſters or people, except where the word of God is too little conſulted or regarded. Another point in which I aim at a medium is in what is called *prudence*. There is certainly ſuch a thing as Chriſtian prudence, and a remarkable deficiency of it is highly inconvenient. But caution too often degenerates into cowardice; and if the fear of man, under the name of prudence, gets within our guard, like a chilling froſt it nips every thing in the bud. Thoſe who truſt the Lord, and act openly with an honeſt freedom and conſiſtence, I obſerve he generally bears them out, ſmooths their way, and makes their enemies their friends, or at leaſt reſtrains their rage; while ſuch as halve things, temporiſe, and aim to pleaſe God and man together, meet with double diſappointment, and are neither uſeful nor reſpected.

If

If we truſt to him, he will ſtand by us; if we regard men, he will leave us to make the beſt we can of them.

I have ſet down haſtily what occurred to my pen, not to dictate to you, but to tell you how I have been led, and becauſe ſome expreſſions in your letter ſeemed to imply that you would not be diſpleaſed with me for ſo doing. As to books, I think there is a medium here likewiſe. I have read too much in time paſt; yet I do not wholly join with ſome of our brethren, who would reſtrain us entirely to the word of God. Undoubtedly this is the fountain; here we ſhould dwell; but a moderate and judicious peruſal of other authors may have its uſe; and I am glad to be beholden to ſuch helps, either to explain what I do not underſtand, or to confirm me in what I do. Of theſe the writings of the laſt age afford an immenſe variety.

But above all, may we, dear Sir, live and feed upon the precious promiſes, John, xiv. 16. 17. 26. and xvi. 13.—15. There is no teacher like Jeſus, who by his Holy Spirit reveals himſelf in his word to the underſtanding and affections of his children. When we thus behold his glory in the goſpel glaſs, we are changed into the ſame image. Then our hearts melt, our eyes flow, our ſtammering tongues are unlooſed. That this may be your increaſing experience, is the prayer of, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER III.

Dear Sir, *January* 21. 1766.

YOur letters give me the ſincereſt pleaſure. Let us believe that we are daily thinking of and praying for each other, and write when opportunity offers without apologies. I praiſe the Lord that he has led you ſo ſoon to a ſettled judgement in the leading truths of the goſpel. For want of this, many have been neceſſitated with their own hands to pull down what, in the firſt warm emotions of their zeal, they had laboured hard to build. It is a mercy likewiſe, to be enabled to acknowledge what is excellent in the writings or conduct of others, without adopting their ſingularities, or diſcarding the whole on account of a few blemiſhes. We ſhould be glad to receive inſtruction from all, and avoid being led by the *ipſe dixit* of any. *Nullius jurare in verbum* is a fit motto for thoſe who have one maſter, even Chriſt. We may grow wiſe apace in opinions, by books and men; but vital, experimental knowledge can only be received from the Holy Spirit, the great inſtructor and comforter of his people. And there are two things obſervable in his teaching: 1. That he honours the means of his own appointment, ſo that we cannot expect to make any great progreſs without diligence on our parts: 2. That he does not teach all at once, but by degrees. Experience is his ſchool; and by this I mean the obſervation and improvement of what paſſes within us and around us in the courſe of every day. The word of God affords a hiſtory in miniature of the heart of man, the devices of Satan, the ſtate of the world, and the method of grace. And the moſt inſtructing and affecting commentary

on

on it to an enlightened mind may be gathered from what we ſee, feel, and hear, from day to day. *Res, ætas, uſus, ſemper aliquid apportent novi:* and no knowledge in ſpiritual things but what we acquire in this way is properly our own, or will abide the time of trial. This is not always ſufficiently conſidered: we are ready to expect that others ſhould receive upon our word, in half an hour's time, thoſe views of things which have coſt us years to attain. But none can be brought forward faſter than the Lord is pleaſed to communicate inward light. Upon this ground controverſies have been multiplied among Chriſtians to little purpoſe, for plants of different ſtandings will be (*cæteris paribus*) in different degrees of forwardneſs. A young Chriſtian is like a green fruit; it has perhaps a diſagreeable auſterity, which cannot be corrected out of its proper courſe: it wants time and growth: wait a while, and by the nouriſhment it receives from the root, together with the action of the ſun, wind, and rain, in ſucceſſion from without, it will inſenſibly acquire that flavour and maturity, for the want of which an unſkilful judge would be ready to reject it as nothing worth. We are favoured with many excellent books in our tongue; but I with you agree in aſſigning one of the firſt places (as a teacher) to Dr Owen. I have juſt finiſhed his diſcourſe on the Holy Spirit, which is an epitome, if not the maſter-piece of his writings. I ſhould be glad to ſee the republication you ſpeak of; but I queſtion if the bookſellers will venture upon it. I ſhall perhaps mention it to my London friends. As to Archbiſhop Leighton, beſides his ſelect works, there are two octavo volumes publiſhed at Edinburgh in the year 1748, and ſince reprinted at London. They contain a valuable commentary on St Peter's Firſt Epiſtle, and Lectures on Iſa. vi. Pſ. xxxix. cxxx. iv. and a part of Rom. xii. I

have

have likewiſe a ſmall quarto in Latin, of his Divinity Lectures, when Profeſſor at Edinburgh: the ſhort title is, *Prælectiones Theologiæ*. Mine was printed in London 1698. I believe this book is ſcarce: I ſet the higheſt value upon it. He has wonderfully united the ſimplicity of the goſpel with all the captivating beauties of ſtyle and language. Biſhop Burnet ſays, he was the greateſt maſter of the Latin tongue he ever knew, of which, together with his compaſs of learning, he has given proof in his lectures: yet, in his gayer dreſs, his eminent humility and ſpirituality appear to no leſs advantage than when clad in plain Engliſh. I think it may be ſaid to be a diamond ſet in gold. I could wiſh it tranſlated, if it was poſſible (which I almoſt queſtion) to preſerve the beauty and ſpirit of the original.

Edwards on Free-will I have read with pleaſure, as a good anſwer to the proud reaſoners in their own way; but a book of that ſort cannot be generally read: where the ſubject-matter is unpleaſing, and the method of treating it requires more attention than the Athenian ſpirit of the times will bear, I wonder not if it is uncalled for; and am afraid we ſhall not ſee him upon Original Sin, if it depends upon the ſale of the other. This anſwer to Dr Taylor, which you ſpeak of, is not a MS. but has been already printed at Boſton.

You ſend us good news indeed, that two more of your brethren are declaring on the goſpel ſide. The Lord confirm and ſtrengthen them, add yet to your numbers, and make you helps and comforts to each other. Surely he is about to ſpread his work. Happy thoſe whom he honours to be fellow-workers with him. Let us account the diſgrace we ſuffer for his name's ſake to be our great honour. Many will be againſt us; but there are more for us. All the praying ſouls on earth, all the glorified ſaints in

in heaven, all the angels of God, yea, the God of angels himſelf, all are on our ſide. Satan may rage, but he is a chained enemy. Men may contradict and fight, but they cannot prevail. Two things we ſhall eſpecially need, courage and patience, that we neither faint before them, nor upon any provocation act in their ſpirit. If we can pity and pray for them, return good for evil, make them ſenſible that we bear them a hearty good will, and act as the diſciples of him who wept for his enemies, and prayed for his murderers; in this way, we ſhall find the Lord will plead our cauſe, ſoften oppoſers, and by degrees give us a meaſure of outward peace. Warmth and imprudence have often added to the neceſſary burden of the croſs. I rejoice that the Lord has led you in a different way; and I hope your doctrine and example will make your path ſmoother every day: you find it ſo in part already. As the Lord brings you out a people witneſſes for you to the truth of his word, you will find advantage in bringing them often together. The interval from Sabbath to Sabbath is a good while, and affords time for the world and Satan to creep in. Intermediate meetings for prayer, &c. when properly conducted, are greatly uſeful. I could wiſh for larger ſheets and longer leiſure; but I am conſtrained to ſay adieu, in our dear Lord and Saviour.

Yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir, *Dec.* 12. 1767.

THis is not intended as an anſwer to your laſt acceptable letter, but an occaſional line, in conſequence of the account Mr T—— has given me of your late illneſs. I truſt this diſpenſation will be uſeful to you; and I wiſh the knowledge of it may be ſo to me. I am favoured with an unuſual ſhare of health, and an equal flow of ſpirits. If the blow you have received ſhould be a warning to me, I ſhall have cauſe to be thankful. I am glad to hear you are better; I hope the Lord has no deſign to diſable you from ſervice, but rather (as he did Jacob) to ſtrengthen you by wounding you; to maintain and increaſe in you that conviction which, through grace, you have received, of the vanity and uncertainty of every thing below; to give you a lively ſenſe of the value of health and opportunities, and to add to the treaſury of your experience new proofs of his power and goodneſs, in ſupporting, comforting, and healing you; and likewiſe to quicken the prayers of your people for you, and to ſtir them up to uſe double diligence in the preſent improvement of the means of grace, while by this late inſtance they ſee how ſoon and ſuddenly you might have been removed from them.

I underſtand you did not feel that lively exerciſe of faith and joy which you would have hoped to have found at ſuch a ſeaſon: but let not this diſcourage you from a firm confidence, that when the hour of diſmiſſion ſhall come, the Lord will be faithful to his gracious promiſe, and give you ſtrength ſufficient to encounter and vanquiſh your laſt enemy. You had not this ſtrength lately, becauſe you need-

ed

ed it not: for though you might think yourſelf near to death, the Lord intended to reſtore you; and he permitted you to feel weakneſs, that you might know your ſtrength does not conſiſt in grace received, but in his fullneſs, and his promiſe to communicate from himſelf as your occaſions require. O it is a great thing to be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus! but it is a hard leſſon; it is not eaſy to underſtand it in theory; but when the Lord has taught us ſo far, it is ſtill more difficult to reduce our knowledge to practice. But this is one end he has in view, in permitting us to paſs through ſuch a variety of inward and outward exerciſes, that we may ceaſe from truſting in ourſelves, or in any creature, or frame, or experiences, and be brought to a ſtate of ſubmiſſion and dependence upon him alone. I was once viſited ſomething in the ſame way, ſeized with a fit of the apoplectic kind, which held me near an hour, and left a diſorder in my head, which quite broke the ſcheme of life I was then in, and was conſequently one of the means the Lord appointed to bring me into the miniſtry: but I ſoon perfectly recovered. From the remembrance Mrs —— has of what ſhe then ſuffered, ſhe knows how to ſympathiſe with Mrs B—— in her ſhare of your trial. And I think dear Mr —— ſome years ſince had a ſudden ſtroke on a Chriſtmas-day, which diſabled him from duty for a time. To him and to me theſe turns were only like the caution which Philip of Macedon ordered to be repeated to him every morning, Remember thou art a man. I hope it will be no more to you, but that you ſhall live to praiſe him, and to give many cauſe to praiſe him on your behalf. Bleſſed be God, we are in ſafe hands; the Lord himſelf is our keeper; nothing befals us but what is adjuſted by his wiſdom and love. Health is his gift; and ſickneſs, when ſanctified, is a token of love

love likewiſe. Here we may meet with many things which are not joyous, but grievous to the fleſh; but he will in one way or other ſweeten every bitter cup, and ere long he will wipe away all tears from our eyes. O that joy, that crown, that glory which awaits the believer! Let us keep the prize of our high calling in view, and preſs forward in the name of Jeſus the Redeemer, and he will not diſappoint our hopes.

I am but juſt come off from a journey, am weary, and it grows late; muſt therefore break off. When you have leiſure and ſtrength to write, oblige me with a confirmation of your recovery, for I ſhall be ſomething anxious about you.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

My dear Friend, *March* 14. 1775.

I Thought you long in writing, but am afraid I have been longer. A heavy family-affliction called me from home in December, which put me out of my uſual courſe, and threw me behind-hand in my correſpondence; yet I did not ſuſpect the date of your laſt letter was ſo old by two months as I find it. Whether I write more frequently or more ſeldom, the love of my heart to you is the ſame, and I ſhall believe the like of you; yet if it can be helped, I hope the interval will not be ſo long again on either ſide. I am glad that the Lord's work ſtill flouriſhes in your parts, and that you have a more comfortable proſpect at home than formerly; and I was pleaſed with the acceptance you found at S——; which I hope will be an earneſt

neſt of greater things. I think affairs in general, with reſpect to this land, have a dark appearance; but it is comfortable to obſerve, that, amidſt the aboundings of iniquity, the Lord is ſpreading his goſpel; and that, though many oppoſe, yet in moſt places whither the word is ſent, great numbers ſeem diſpoſed to hear. I am going (if the Lord pleaſe) into Leiceſterſhire on Friday. This was lately ſuch a dark place as you deſcribe your country to be, and much of it is ſo ſtill; but the Lord has viſited three of the principal towns with goſpel-light. I have a deſire of viſiting theſe brethren in the vineyard, to bear my poor teſtimony to the truths they preach, and to catch, if I may, a little fire and fervour among them. I do not often go abroad; but I have found a little excurſion now and then (when the way is made plain) has its advantages, to quicken the ſpirits, and enlarge the ſphere of obſervation. On theſe accounts, the recollection of my N—— journey gives me pleaſure to this day; and very glad ſhould I be to repeat it; but the diſtance is ſo great, that I conſider it rather as deſirable than practicable.

My experiences vary as well as yours: but poſſibly your ſenſations, both of the ſweet and of the bitter, may be ſtronger than mine. The enemy aſſaults me more by ſap than ſtorm; and I am ready to think I ſuffer more by langour than ſome of my friends do by the ſharper conflicts to which they are called. So likewiſe in theſe ſeaſons, which comparatively I call my beſt hours, my ſenſible comforts are far from lively. But I am in general enabled to hold faſt my confidence, and to venture myſelf upon the power, faithfulneſs, and compaſſion of that adorable Saviour, to whom my ſoul has been directed and encouraged to flee for refuge. I am a poor, changeable, inconſiſtent creature; but he deals graciouſly with me; he does not leave me wholly to myſelf;

myſelf; but I have ſuch daily proofs of the malignity and efficacy of the ſin that dwelleth in me, as ought to cover me with ſhame and confuſion of face, and make me thankful if I am permitted to rank with the meaneſt of thoſe who ſit at his feet. That I was ever called to the knowledge of his ſalvation, was a ſingular inſtance of his ſovereign grace; and that I am ſtill preſerved in the way, in defiance of all that has ariſen from within and from without to turn me aſide, muſt be wholly aſcribed to the ſame ſovereignty: and if, as I truſt, he ſhall be pleaſed to make me a conqueror at laſt, I ſhall have peculiar reaſon to ſay, Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name, O Lord, be the glory and the praiſe!

How oft have ſin and Satan ſtrove
To rend my ſoul from thee, my God!
But everlaſting is thy love,
And Jeſus ſeals it with his blood.

The Lord leads me in the courſe of my preaching to inſiſt much on a life of communion with himſelf, and of the great deſign of the goſpel to render us conformable to him in love; and as by his mercy nothing appears in my outward conduct remarkably to contradict what I ſay, many who only can judge by what they ſee, ſuppoſe I live a very happy life. But alas! if they knew what paſſes in my heart, how dull my ſpirit is in ſecret, and how little I am myſelf affected by the glorious truths I propoſe to others, they would form a different judgement. Could I be myſelf what I recommend to them, I ſhould be happy indeed. Pray for me, my dear friend, that now the Lord is bringing forward the pleaſing ſpring, he may favour me with a ſpring ſeaſon in my ſoul; for indeed I mourn under a long winter.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

My dear Friend, *April* 16. 1772.

I Hope the Lord has contracted my deſires and aims almoſt to the one point of ſtudy, the knowledge of his truth. All other acquiſitions are tranſient, and comparatively vain. And yet, alas! I am a ſlow ſcholar: nor can I ſee in what reſpect I get forward, unleſs that every day I am more confirmed in the conviction of my own emptineſs and inability to all ſpiritual good. And as, notwithſtanding this, I am ſtill enabled to ſtand my ground, I would hope, ſince no effect can be without an adequate cauſe, that I have made ſome advance, though in a manner imperceptible to myſelf, towards a more ſimple dependence upon Jeſus as my all in all. It is given me to thirſt and to taſte, if it is not given me to drink abundantly; and I would be thankful for the deſire. I ſee and approve the wiſdom, grace, ſuitableneſs, and ſufficiency of the goſpel ſalvation; and ſince it is for ſinners, and I am a ſinner, and the promiſes are open, I do not heſitate to call it mine. I am a weary, laden ſoul; Jeſus has invited me to come, and has enabled me to put my truſt in him. I ſeldom have an uneaſy doubt, at leaſt not of any continuance, reſpecting my pardon, acceptance, and intereſt in all the bleſſings of the New Teſtament. And amidſt a thouſand infirmities and evils under which I groan, I have the teſtimony of my conſcience when under the trial of his word, that my deſire is ſincerely towards him, that I chooſe no other portion, that I allowedly ſerve no other maſter. When I told our friend —— lately to this purpoſe, he wondered, and aſked, "How is it

poſſible that if you can ſay theſe things you ſhould not be always rejoicing?" Undoubtedly I derive from the goſpel a peace at bottom which is worth more than a thouſand worlds: but ſo it is, I can only ſpeak for myſelf, though I reſt and live upon the truths of the goſpel, they ſeldom impreſs me with a warm and lively joy. In public, indeed, I ſometimes ſeem in earneſt and much affected, but even then it appears to me rather as a part of the gift intruſted to me for the edification of others, than as a ſenſation which is properly my own. For when I am in private I am uſually dull and ſtupid to a ſtrange degree, or the prey to a wild and ungoverned imagination; ſo that I may truly ſay, when I would do good, evil, horrid evil, is preſent with me. Ah, how different is this from ſenſible comfort! and if I was to compare myſelf to others, to make their experience my ſtandard, and was not helped to retreat to the ſure word of God as my refuge, how hard ſhould I find it to maintain a hope that I had either part or lot in the matter! What I call my good times are, when I can find my attention in ſome little meaſure fixed to what I am about, which indeed is not always nor frequently my caſe in prayer, and ſtill ſeldomer in reading the ſcripture. My judgement embraces theſe means as bleſſed privileges, and Satan has not prevailed to drive me from them; but in the performance I too often find them taſks, feel a reluctance when the ſeaſons return, and am glad when they are finiſhed. O what a myſtery is the heart of man! What a warfare is the life of faith, (at leaſt in the path the Lord is pleaſed to lead me)! What reaſon have I to lie in the duſt as the chief of ſinners, and what cauſe for thankfulneſs that ſalvation is wholly of grace! Notwithſtanding all my complaints, it is ſtill true that Jeſus died and roſe again, that he ever liveth to make interceſſion,

ceſſion, and is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. But on the other hand, to think of that joy of heart in which ſome of his people live, and to compare it with that apparent deadneſs and want of ſpirituality which I feel, this makes me mourn. However, I think there is a ſcriptural diſtinction between faith and feeling, grace and comfort; they are not inſeparable, and perhaps when together, the degree of the one is not often the juſt meaſure of the other. But though I pray that I may be ever longing and panting for the light of his countenance, yet I would be ſo far ſatisfied, as to believe the Lord has wiſe and merciful reaſons for keeping me ſo ſhort of the comforts which he has taught me to deſire and value more than the light of the ſun.

I am, &c.

NINE
LETTERS
TO THE
REV. MR R——.

LETTER I.

Dear Sir, *Jan.* 16. 1772.

IT is true I was apprehenſive from your ſilence that I had offended you; but when your letter came it made me full amends: and now I am glad I wrote as I did, though I am perſuaded I ſhall never write to you again in the ſame ſtrain. I am pleaſed with the ſpirit you diſcover; and your bearing ſo well to be told of the miſtakes I pointed out to you, endears you more to me than if you had not made them. Henceforward I can converſe freely with you, and ſhall be glad when I have the opportunity.

As to your view of juſtification, I did not oppoſe it; I judge for myſelf, and I am willing others ſhould have the ſame liberty. If we hold the *head* and love the Lord, we *agree* in him, and I ſhould think my time ill employed in diſputing the point with you. I only meant to except againſt the poſitive manner in which you had expreſſed yourſelf. My end is anſwered, and I am ſatisfied. Indeed I believe the difference between a *judicious* Supralapſarian, and a *ſound* Sub-lapſarian, lies more in a different way of expreſſing their ſentiments than is generally thought. At the cloſe of Halyburton's Inſufficiency of Natural Religion, he has an Enquiry into the Nature of Regeneration and Juſtification, wherein he propoſes a ſcheme, in which, if I miſtake not, the moderate of both parties might ſafely unite. I have uſed the epithets *judicious* and *ſound*, becauſe, as I acknowledge ſome of the one

ſide are not quite *ſound*, ſo I think ſome on the other ſide are not ſo *judicious* as I could wiſh; that is, I think they do not ſufficiently advert to the preſent ſtate of human nature, and the danger which may ariſe from leading thoſe who are weak in faith and judgement, into inquiries and diſtinctions evidently beyond the line of their experience, and which may be hurtful; becauſe, admitting them to be true when properly explained, they are very liable to be miſunderſtood. To ſay nothing of Mr Huſſey, (in whoſe proviſions I have frequently found more bones than meat, and ſeaſoned with much of an angry and ſelf-important ſpirit), I have obſerved paſſages in other writers, for whom I have a higher eſteem, which, to ſay the leaſt, appear to me paradoxical and hard to be underſtood; though perhaps I can give my conſent to them, if I had ſuch reſtrictions and limitations as the authors would not refuſe. But plain people are eaſily puzzled. And though I know ſeveral in the Supra-lapſarian ſcheme, at whoſe feet I am willing to ſit and learn, and have found their preaching and converſation ſavoury and edifying; yet I muſt ſay I have met with many who have appeared to be rather wiſe than warm, rather poſitive than humble, rather captious than lively, and more diſpoſed to talk of ſpeculations than experience. However, let us give ourſelves to the ſtudy of the word and to prayer; and may the great teacher make every ſcriptural truth food to our ſouls. I deſire to grow in knowledge, but I want nothing which bears that name that has not a direct tendency to make ſin more hateful, Jeſus more precious to my ſoul; and at the ſame time to animate me to a diligent uſe of every appointed means, and an unreſerved regard to every branch of duty. I think the Lord has ſhewn me in a meaſure there is a conſiſtent ſenſe running through the whole ſcripture,

ture, and I desire to be governed and influenced by it all: Doctrines, precepts, promises, warnings, all have their proper place and use: and I think many of the inconveniencies which obtain in the present day, spring from separating those things which God hath joined together, and insisting on some parts of the word of God almost to the exclusion of the rest.

I have filled my paper with what I did not intend to say a word of when I begun, and must leave other things which were more upon my mind for another season. I thank you for saying you pray for me. Continue that kindness; I both need it and prize it.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir, *July* 31. 1773.

I Received your sorrowful epistle yesterday, and in order to encourage you to write, I answer it to-day.

The ship was safe when Christ was in her, tho' he was *really* asleep. At present I can tell you good news, though you know it; he is wide awake, and his eyes are in every place. You and I, if we could be pounded together, might perhaps make two tolerable ones. You are too anxious, and I am too easy in some respects. Indeed I cannot be too easy, when I have a right thought that all is safe in his hands; but if your anxiety makes you pray, and my composure makes me careless, you have certainly the best of it. However, the ark is fixed upon an immoveable foundation; and if we

think we ſee it totter, it is owing to a ſwimming in our heads. Seriouſly, the times look dark and ſtormy, and call for much circumſpection and prayer; but let us not forget that we have an infallible pilot, and that the power, and wiſdom, and honour of God, are embarked with us. At Venice they have a fine veſſel, called the *Bucentaur*, in which, on a certain day of the year, the Doge and Nobles embark, and go a little way to ſea, to repeat the fooliſh ceremony of marriage between the Republic and the Adriatic, (in conſequence of ſome lying, antiquated Pope's bull, by which the banns of matrimony between Venice and the Gulf were publiſhed in the dark ages), when they ſay a gold ring is very gravely thrown overboard. Upon this occaſion, I have been told, when the honour and government of Venice are ſhipped on board the Bucentaur, the pilot is obliged by his office to take an oath that he will bring the veſſel ſafely back again, *in defiance of winds and weather*. Vain mortals! If this be true, what an inſtance of God's long-ſuffering is it, that they have never yet ſunk as lead in the mighty waters! But my ſtory will probably remind you, that Jeſus has actually entered into ſuch an engagement in behalf of his church. And well he may, for both wind and weather are at his command; and he can turn the ſtorm into a calm in a moment. We may therefore ſafely and confidently leave the government upon his ſhoulders. Duty is our part, the care is his.

A revival is wanted with us as well as with you, and I truſt ſome of us are longing for it. We are praying and ſinging for one; and I ſend you, on the other ſide, a hymn, that you (if you like it) may ſing with us. Let us take courage; though it may ſeem marvellous in our eyes, it is not ſo in the Lord's. He changed the deſert into a fruitful field, and bid dry bones live. And if he pre-

pare

pare our heart to pray, he will ſurely incline his ear to hear.

The miſcarriages of profeſſors are grievous; yet ſuch things muſt be; how elſe could the ſcriptures be fulfilled? But there is one who is able to keep *us* from falling. Some who have diſtreſſed us perhaps never were truly changed; how then could they ſtand? We ſee only the outſide. Others who are ſincere are permitted to fall for our inſtruction, that we may not be high-minded, but fear. However, he that walketh humbly walketh ſurely.

Believe me, &c.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir, *Feb.* 22. 1774.

YOur letter by laſt poſt ſurpriſed and grieved me. We knew nothing of the ſubject, though Mrs —— remembers, when —— was here, a hint or two was dropped which ſhe did not underſtand; but no name was mentioned.

This inſtance ſhews the danger of leaning to impreſſions. Texts of ſcripture brought powerfully to the heart are very deſirable and pleaſant, if their tendency is to humble us, to give us a more feeling ſenſe of the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, or of the doctrines of grace; if they make ſin more hateful, enliven our regard to the means, or increaſe our confidence in the power and faithfulneſs of God. But if they are underſtood as intimating our path of duty in particular circumſtances, or confirming us in purpoſes we may have already formed, not otherwiſe clearly warranted by the general ſtrain of the

word, or by the leadings of Providence, they are for the moſt part enſnaring, and always to be ſuſpected. Nor does their coming into the mind at the time of prayer give them more authority in this reſpect. When the mind is intent upon any ſubject, the imagination is often watchful to catch at any thing which may ſeem to countenance the favourite purſuit. It is too common to aſk counſel of the Lord when we have already ſecretly determined for ourſelves: and in this diſpoſition we may eaſily be deceived by the ſound of a text of ſcripture, which, detached from the paſſage in which it ſtands, may ſeem remarkably to tally with our wiſhes. Many have been deceived this way; and ſometimes, when the event has ſhewn them they were miſtaken, it has opened a door for great diſtreſs, and Satan has found occaſion to make them doubt even of their moſt ſolid experiences.

I have ſometimes talked to ——— upon this ſubject, though without the leaſt ſuſpicion of any thing like what has happened. As to the preſent caſe, it may remind us all of our weakneſs. I would recommend prayer, patience, much tenderneſs towards her, joined with faithful expoſtulation. Wait a little while, and I truſt the Lord who loves her will break the ſnare. I am perſuaded, in her better judgement, ſhe would dread the thoughts of doing wrong; and I hope and believe the good Shepherd, to whom ſhe has often committed her ſoul and her ways, will interpoſe to reſtore and ſet her to rights. - - -

their hearts, and be more humbled in future, when the Lord ſhall have healed their breaches, and reſtored their ſouls. We join love to you and yours. Pray for us.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir, *Feb.* 3. 1775.

IT would be wrong to make you wait long for an anſwer to the point you propoſe in your laſt. It is an important one. I am not a caſuiſt by profeſſion, but I will do my beſt. Suppoſe I imitate your laconic manner of ſtating the queſtion and circumſtances.

I doubt not but it is very lawful at your age to think of marriage, and, in the ſituation you deſcribe, to think of money likewiſe. I am glad you have no perſon, as you ſay, *fixedly in view*; in that caſe advice comes a poſt or two too late. But your expreſſion ſeems to intimate, that there is one *tranſiently in view*. If it be ſo, ſince you have no ſettlement, if ſhe has no money, I cannot but wiſh ſhe may paſs on till ſhe is out of ſight and out of mind. I ſee this will not do; I muſt get into my own grave way about this grave buſineſs. I take it for granted, that my friend is free from the love of filthy lucre; and that money will never be the turning point with you in the choice of a wife. Methinks I hear you think, if I wanted money I would either dig or beg for it; but to preach or marry for money, that be far from me. I commend you. However, though the love of money be a great evil,

evil, money itſelf, obtained in a fair and honourable way, is deſirable upon many accounts, though not for its own ſake. Meat, clothes, fire, and books, cannot eaſily be had without it: therefore, if theſe be neceſſary, money which procures them muſt be a neceſſary likewiſe. If things were otherwiſe than you repreſent them, if you were able to provide for a wife yourſelf, then I would ſay, Find a gracious girl (if ſhe be not found already) whoſe perſon you like, whoſe temper you think will ſuit; and then, with your father and mother's conſent, (without which I think you would be unwilling to move) thank the Lord for her, marry her, and account her a valuable portion, though ſhe ſhould not have a ſhilling. But while you are without income or ſettlement, if you have thoughts of marriage, I hope they will be regulated by a due regard to conſequences. They who ſet the leaſt value upon money have in ſome reſpects the moſt need of it. A generous mind will feel a thouſand pangs in ſtrait circumſtances which ſome unfeeling hearts would not be ſenſible of. You could perhaps endure hardſhips alone, yet it might pinch you to the very bone to ſee the perſon you love expoſed to them. Beſides, you might have a John, a Thomas, and a William, and half a dozen more to feed, (for they muſt all eat); and how this could be done without a competency on one ſide or the other, or ſo much on both ſides as will make a competency when united, I ſee not. Beſides, you would be grieved not to find an occaſional ſhilling in your pocket to beſtow upon one or other of the Lord's poor, though you ſhould be able to make ſome ſort of a ſhift for thoſe of your own houſe.

But is it not written, "The Lord will provide?" It is: but it is written again, "Thou ſhalt not "tempt the Lord thy God." Haſtily to plunge ourſelves

ourſelves into difficulties, upon a perſuaſion that he will find ſome way to extricate us, ſeems to me a ſpecies of tempting him.

Therefore I judge, *It is ſo far lawful for you to have a regard to money in looking out for a wife,* that it would be wrong, that is, in other words, *unlawful,* for you to omit it, ſuppoſing you have a purpoſe of marrying in your preſent ſituation.

Many ſerious young women have a predilection in favour of a miniſter of the goſpel; and I believe among ſuch one or more may be found as ſpiritual, as amiable, as ſuitable to make you a good wife, with a tolerable fortune to boot, as another who has not a penny. If you are not willing to truſt your own judgement in the ſearch, intreat the Lord to find her for you. He choſe well for Iſaac and Jacob; and you as a believer have warrant to commit your way to him, and many more expreſs promiſes than they had for your encouragement. He knows your ſtate, your wants, what you are at preſent, and what uſe he deſigns to make of you. Truſt in him, and wait for him: prayer, and faith, and patience, are never diſappointed. I commend you to his bleſſing and guidance. Remember us to all in your houſe.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir, *May* 28. 1775.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - You muſt not expect a long letter this morning; we are juſt going to court, in hopes of ſeeing the King, for he has promiſed to meet

meet us. We can ſay he is mindful of his promiſe; and yet is it not ſtrange that though we are all in the ſame place, and the King in the midſt of us, it is but here and there one (even of thoſe who love him) can ſee him at once! However, in our turns we are all favoured with a glimpſe of him, and have had cauſe to ſay, How great is his goodneſs! How great is his beauty! We have the advantage of the Queen of Sheba, a more glorious object to behold, and not ſo far to go for the ſight of it. If a tranſient glance exceeds all that the world can afford for a long continuance, what muſt it be to dwell with him! If a day in his courts be better than a thouſand, what will eternity be in his preſence! I hope the more you ſee, the more you love; the more you drink, the more you thirſt; the more you do for him, the more you are aſhamed you can do ſo little; and that the nearer you approach to your journey's end, the more your pace is quickened. Surely, the power of ſpiritual attraction ſhould increaſe as the diſtance leſſens. O, that heavenly loadſtone! may it ſo draw us that we may not creep, but run. In common travelling the ſtrongeſt become weary if the journey be very long; but in the ſpiritual journey we are encouraged with a hope of going on from ſtrength to ſtrength. *Inſtaurabit iter vires*, as Johnſon expreſſes it. No road but the road to heaven can thus communicate refreſhment to thoſe who walk in it, and make them more freſh and lively when they are juſt finiſhing their courſe than when they firſt ſet out.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir, *April* 18. 1776.

ARE you ſick, or lame of your right hand, or are you buſy in preparing a folio for the preſs, that I hear nothing from you? You ſee by the excuſes I would contrive I am not willing to ſuppoſe you have forgotten me, but that your ſilence is rather owing to a *cannot* than a *will not*.

I hope your ſoul proſpers. I do not aſk you if you are always filled with ſenſible comfort: but do you find your ſpirit more bowed down to the feet and will of Jeſus, ſo as to be willing to ſerve him for the ſake of ſerving him, and to follow him, as we ſay, through thick and thin; to be willing to be any thing or nothing, ſo that he may be glorified? I could give you plenty of good advice upon this head; but I am aſhamed to do it, becauſe I ſo poorly follow it myſelf. I want to live with him by the day, to do all for him, to receive all from him, to poſſeſs all in him, to live all to him, to make him my hiding-place and my reſting-place. I want to deliver up that rebel ſelf to him in chains; but the rogue, like Proteus, puts on ſo many forms, that he ſlips through my fingers: but I think I know what I would do if I could fairly catch him.

My ſoul is like a beſieged city: a legion of enemies without the gates, and a neſt of reſtleſs traitors within, that hold a correſpondence with them without; ſo that I am deceived and counteracted continually. It is a mercy that I have not been ſurpriſed and overwhelmed long ago: without help from on high it would ſoon be over with me. How often have I been forced to cry out, O God, the

Heathen

Heathen are got into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, and defaced all thy work! Indeed it is a miracle that I ſtill hold out. I truſt, however, I ſhall be ſupported to the end, and that my Lord will at length raiſe the ſiege, and cauſe me to ſhout deliverance and victory.

Pray for me, that my walls may be ſtrengthened and wounds healed. We are all pretty well as to the outward man, and join in love to all friends.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

Dear Sir, *July* 6. 1776.

I Was abroad when your letter came, but employ the firſt poſt to thank you for your confidence. My prayers (when I can pray) you may be ſure of; as to advice, I ſee not that the caſe requires much. Only be a quiet child, and lie patiently at the Lord's feet. He is the beſt friend and manager in theſe matters, for he has a key to open every heart - I ſhould not have taken Mr Z——'s letter for a denial, as it ſeems you did. Conſidering the years of the parties, and other circumſtances, a prudent parent could hardly ſay more, if he were inclined to favour your views. To me you ſeem to be in a tolerable fair way; but I know in affairs of this kind Mr Self does not like ſuſpence, but would willingly come to the point at once: but Mr Faith (when he gets liberty to hold up his head) will own, that in order to make our temporal mercies wear well, and to give us a clearer ſenſe of the hand

that

that beſtows them, a waiting and a praying time are very ſeaſonable. Worldly people expect their ſchemes to run upon all-fours, as we ſay, and the objects of their wiſhes to drop into their mouths without difficulty; and if they ſucceed, they of courſe burn incenſe to their own drag, and ſay, This was my doing: but believers meet with rubs and diſappointments, which convince them, that if they obtain any thing it is the Lord muſt do it for them. For this reaſon I obſerve, that he uſually brings a death upon our proſpects, even when it is his purpoſe to give us ſucceſs in the iſſue. Thus we become more aſſured that we did not act in our own ſpirits, and have a more ſatisfactory view that his providence has been concerned in filling up the rivers and removing the mountains that were in our way. Then when he has given us our deſire, how pleaſant is it to look at it and ſay, This I got not by my own ſword and my own bow, but I wreſtled for it in prayer, I waited for it in faith, I put it into the Lord's hand, and from his hand I received it.

You have met with the ſtory of one of our kings (if I miſtake not) who wanted to ſend a nobleman abroad as his ambaſſador, and he deſired to be excuſed on account of ſome affairs which required his preſence at home: the king anſwered, "Do "you take care of my buſineſs, and I will take "care of yours." I would have you think the Lord ſays thus to you. You were ſent into the world for a nobler end than to be pinned to a girl's apron-ſtring; and yet if the Lord ſees it not good for you to be alone, he will provide you a help-meet. I ſay, if he ſees the marriage ſtate beſt for you, he has the proper perſon *already* in his eye, and though ſhe were in Peru or Nova-Zembla, he knows how to bring you together. In the mean time, go thou and preach the goſpel. Watch in all

all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an Evangeliſt; make full proof of your miniſtry: and when other thoughts riſe in your mind, (for you have no door to ſhut them quite out), run with them to the throne of grace, and commit them to the Lord. Satan will perhaps try to force them upon you unſeaſonably and inordinately; but if he ſees they drive you to prayer, he will probably deſiſt, rather than be the occaſion of doing you ſo much good. Believe likewiſe, that as the Lord has the appointment of the perſon, ſo he fixes the time. His time is like the time of the tide; all the art and power of man can neither haſten or retard it a moment: it muſt be waited for; nothing can be done without it, and when it comes, nothing can reſiſt it. It is unbelief that talks of delays: faith knows that properly there can be no ſuch thing. The only reaſon why the Lord ſeems to delay what he afterwards grants, is, that the beſt hour is not yet come. I know you have been enabled to commit and reſign your all to his diſpoſal. You did well. May he help you to ſtand to the ſurrender. Sometimes he will put us to the trial, whether we mean what we ſay. He takes his courſe in a way we did not expect; and then, alas! how often does the trial put us to ſhame. Preſently there is an outcry raiſed in the ſoul againſt his management; this is wrong, that unneceſſary, the other has ſpoiled the whole plan; in ſhort, all theſe things are againſt us. And then we go into the pulpit, and gravely tell the people how wiſe and how good he is; and preach ſubmiſſion to his will, not only as a duty, but a privilege! Alas, how deceitful is the heart! Yet ſince it is and will be ſo, it is neceſſary we ſhould know it by experience. We have reaſon however to ſay, He is good and wiſe; for he bears with our perverſeneſs, and in the event ſhews us that if he had liſtened to our murmurings, and

taken

taken the methods we would have preſcribed to him, we ſhould have been ruined indeed, and that he has been all the while doing us good in ſpite of ourſelves.

If I judge right, you will find your way providentially opened more and more; and yet it is poſſible, that when you begin to think yourſelf ſure, ſomething may happen to put you in a panic again. But a believer, like a ſailor, is not to be ſurpriſed if the wind changes, but to learn the art of ſuiting himſelf to all winds for the time; and though many a poor ſailor is ſhipwrecked, the poor believer ſhall gain his port. O it is good ſailing with an infallible pilot at the helm, who has the wind and weather at his command.

I have been much abroad, which of courſe puts things at ſixes and ſevens at home. If I did not love you well, I could not have ſpared ſo much of the only day I have had to myſelf for this fortnight paſt. But I was willing you ſhould know that I think of you and feel for you, if I cannot help you.

I have read Mr ——'s book. Some things I think ſtrongly argued; in ſome he has laid himſelf open to a blow, and I doubt not but he will have it. I expect anſwers, replies, rejoinders, &c. &c. and ſay with Leah, *Gad, a troop cometh.* How the wolf will grin to ſee the ſheep and the ſhepherds biting and worrying one another! And well he may. He knows that contentions are a ſurer way to weaken the Spirit of love, and ſtop the progreſs of the goſpel, than his old ſtale method of fire and ſword. Well, I truſt we ſhall be of one heart and one mind when we get to heaven at leaſt.

Let who will fight, I truſt neither water nor fire ſhall ſet you and me at variance. We unite in love to you. The Lord is gracious to us, &c.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Dear Sir, —— 1776.

I Do not often ſerve your letters ſo, but this laſt I burnt, believing you would like to have it out of danger of falling into improper hands. When I ſaw how eagerly the flames devoured the paper, how quickly and entirely every trace of the writing was conſumed, I wiſhed that the fire of the love of Jeſus might as completely obliterate from your heart every uneaſy impreſſion which your diſappointment has given you - - -

but upon a ſuppoſition that it will be good for you to marry, I may venture to ſay,

Ubi ubi eſt, diu celari non poteſt.

The Lord in his Providence will diſcloſe her, put her in your way, and give you to underſtand, This is ſhe. Then you will find your buſineſs go forward with wheels and wings, and have cauſe to ſay, His choice and time were better than your own.

Did I not tell you formerly, that if you would take care of his buſineſs he will take care of yours? I am of the ſame mind ſtill. He will not ſuffer them who fear him and depend upon him to want any thing that is truly good for them. In the mean while, I adviſe you to take a lodging as near as you can to Gethſemane, and to walk daily to mount Golgotha, and borrow (which may be had for aſking) that teleſcope which gives a proſpect into the unſeen world. A view of what is paſſing within the vail has a marvellous effect to compoſe our ſpirits, with regard to the little things that are daily paſſing here. Praiſe the Lord, who has enabled you to fix your ſupreme affection upon him who is alone the proper and ſuitable object of it, and from whom you cannot meet a denial or fear a change. He loved you firſt, and he will love you for ever; and if he be pleaſed to ariſe and ſmile upon you, you are in no more neceſſity of begging for happineſs to the prettieſt creature upon earth, than of the light of a candle on Midſummer noon.

Upon the whole, I pray and hope the Lord will ſweeten your croſs, and either in kind or in kindneſs make you good amends. Wait, pray, and believe, and all ſhall be well. A croſs we muſt have ſomewhere; and they who are favoured with health, plenty, peace, and a conſcience ſprinkled with

with the blood of Jeſus, *muſt* have more cauſes for thankfulneſs than grief. Look round you, and take notice of the very ſevere afflictions which many of the Lord's own people are groaning under, and your trials will appear comparatively light. Our love to all friends.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

Dear Sir, *June* 3. 1777.

IT ſeems I muſt write ſomething about the ſmall-pox, but I know not well what: having had it myſelf, I cannot judge how I ſhould feel if I were actually expoſed to it. I am not a profeſſed advocate for inoculation; but if a perſon who fears the Lord ſhould tell me, "I think I can do it in "faith, looking upon it as a ſalutary expedient, "which he in his providence has diſcovered, and "which therefore appears my duty to have re-"courſe to, ſo that my mind does not heſitate with "reſpect to the lawfulneſs, nor am I anxious about "the event; being ſatisfied, that whether I live or "die, I am in that path in which I can chearfully "expect his bleſſing," I do not know that I could offer a word by way of diſſuaſion."

If another perſon ſhould ſay, "My times are in "the Lord's hands; I am now in health, and am "not willing to bring upon myſelf a diſorder, the "conſequences of which I cannot poſſibly foreſee: "If I am to have the ſmall-pox, I believe he is the "beſt judge of the ſeaſon and manner in which I "ſhall be viſited, ſo as may be moſt for his glory "and my own good; and therefore I chuſe to wait

"his

" his appointment, and not to ruſh upon even the
" poſſibility of danger without a call. If the very
" hairs of my head are numbered, I have no reaſon
" to fear that, ſuppoſing I receive the ſmall-pox in
" a natural way, I ſhall have a ſingle pimple more
" than he ſees expedient; and why ſhould I wiſh
" to have one leſs? Nay, admitting, which how-
" ever is not always the caſe, that inoculation
" might exempt me from ſome pain and inconve-
" nience, and leſſen the apparent danger, might it
" not likewiſe, upon that very account, prevent
" my receiving ſome of thoſe ſweet conſolations,
" which I humbly hope my gracious Lord would
" afford me, if it were his pleaſure to call me to a
" ſharp trial? Perhaps the chief deſign of this
" trying hour, if it comes, may be to ſhew me more
" of his wiſdom, power, and love, than I have
" ever yet experienced. If I could deviſe a mean
" to avoid the trouble, I know not how great a
" loſer I may be in point of grace and comfort.
" Nor am I afraid of my face; it is now as the
" Lord has made it, and it will be ſo after the
" ſmall-pox. If it pleaſes him, I hope it will pleaſe
" me. In ſhort, though I do not cenſure others,
" yet, as to myſelf, inoculation is what I dare not
" venture upon. If I did venture, and the iſſue
" ſhould not be favourable, I ſhould blame myſelf
" for having attempted to take the management out
" of the Lord's hands into my own, which I never
" did yet in other matters, without finding I am
" no more able than I am worthy to chuſe for
" myſelf. Beſides, at the beſt, inoculation would
" only ſecure me from *one* of the innumerable na-
" tural evils the fleſh is heir to; I ſhould ſtill be
" as liable as I am at preſent to a putrid fever, a
" bilious cholic, an inflammation in the bowels or
" in the brain, and a thouſand formidable diſeaſes
" which are hovering round me, and only wait his
" permiſſion to cut me off in a few days or hours:

" and therefore I am determined, by his grace, to " reſign myſelf to his diſpoſal. Let me fall into " the hands of the Lord, (for his mercies are " great), and not into the hands of men."

If a perſon ſhould talk to me in this ſtrain, moſt certainly I could not ſay, Notwithſtanding all this, your ſafeſt way is to be inoculated.

We preach and hear, and I hope we know ſomething of faith, as enabling us to intruſt the Lord with our ſouls: I wiſh we had all more faith to intruſt him with our bodies, our health, our proviſion, and our temporal comforts likewiſe. The former ſhould ſeem to require the ſtrongeſt faith of the two. How ſtrange is it, that when we think we can do the *greater*, we ſhould be ſo aukward and unſkilful when we aim at the *leſs!* Give my love to your friend. I dare not adviſe: but if ſhe can quietly return at the uſual time, and neither run intentionally into the way of the ſmall-pox, nor run out of the way, but leave it ſimply with the Lord, I ſhall not blame her. And if you will mind your praying and preaching, and believe that the Lord can take care of her without any of your contrivances, I ſhall not blame you: nay, I ſhall praiſe him for you both. My preſcription is to read Dr Watts, Pſalm cxxi. every morning before breakfaſt, and pray it over till the cure is effected. *Probatum eſt.*

Haſt thou not giv'n thy word,
To ſave my ſoul from death?
And I can truſt my Lord
To keep my mortal breath.
I'll go and come,
Nor fear to die,
Till from on high
Thou call me home.

Adieu, pray for yours.

THREE

THREE

LETTERS

TO

MISS TH———.

LETTER I.

My dear Madam,

LET what has been ſaid on the ſubject of acquaintance, &c. ſuffice. It was well meant on my ſide, and well taken on yours. You may perhaps ſee that my hints were not wholly unneceſſary, and I ought to be ſatisfied with your apology, and am ſo. The circumſtance of your being ſeen at the playhouſe has nothing at all myſterious in it, as you ſay you have not been there theſe ſix or ſeven years; it was neither more nor leſs than a miſtake. I heard you had been there within theſe two years: I am glad to find I was miſinformed. I think there is no harm in your ſuppoſing, that of the many thouſands who frequent public diverſions ſome may in other reſpects be better than yourſelf; but I hope your humble and charitable conſtruction of their miſtake will not lead you to extenuate the evil of thoſe diverſions in themſelves. For though I am perſuaded that a few, who know better what to do with themſelves, are for want of conſideration drawn in to expoſe themſelves in ſuch places; yet I am well ſatisfied, that if there is any practice in this land ſinful, attendance on the playhouſe is properly and eminently ſo. The theatres are fountains and means of vice; I had almoſt ſaid, in the ſame manner and degree as the ordinances of the goſpel are the means of grace: and I can hardly think there is a Chriſtian upon earth who would dare to be ſeen there, if the nature and effects of the theatre were properly ſet before them. Dr

Witherſpoon of Scotland has written an excellent piece upon the ſtage, or rather againſt it, which I wiſh every perſon who makes the leaſt pretence to fear God had an opportunity of peruſing. I cannot judge much more favourably of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and all the innumerable train of diſſipations, by which the God of this world blinds the eyes of multitudes, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel ſhould ſhine in upon them. What an awful aſpect upon the preſent times have ſuch texts as Iſa. xxii. 12.—14; iii. 12.; Amos, vi. 3. 6.; James, iv. 4. I wiſh you therefore not to plead for any of them, but uſe all your influence to make them ſhunned as peſt-houſes, and dangerous nuiſances to precious ſouls; eſpecially if you know any who you hope in the main are ſeriouſly diſpoſed, who yet venture themſelves in thoſe purlieus of Satan, endeavour earneſtly and faithfully to undeceive them.

The time is ſhort; eternity at the door: was there no other evil in theſe vain amuſements than the loſs of precious time, (but, alas! their name is legion), we have not leiſure in our circumſtances to regard them. And, bleſſed be God! we need them not. The goſpel opens a ſource of purer, ſweeter, and more ſubſtantial pleaſures: we are invited to communion with God; we are called to ſhare in the theme of angels, the ſongs of heaven, and the wonders of redeeming love are laid open to our view. The Lord himſelf is waiting to be gracious, waiting with promiſes and pardons in his hands. Well then may we bid adieu to the periſhing pleaſures of ſin; well may we pity thoſe who can find pleaſure in thoſe places and parties where he is ſhut out; where his name is only mentioned to be profaned; where his commandments are not only broken, but inſulted; where ſinners proclaim their ſhame as in Sodom, and attempt not to hide it;

where

where at beſt wickedneſs is wrapt up in a diſguiſe of delicacy, to make it more inſinuating; and nothing is offenſive that is not groſsly and unpolitely indecent.

I ſympathiſe with all your complaints; but if the Lord is pleaſed to make them ſubſervient to the increaſe of your ſanctification, to wean you more and more from this world, and to draw you nearer to himſelf, you will one day ſee cauſe to be thankful for them, and to number them amongſt your choiceſt mercies. A hundred years hence it will ſignify little to you whether you were ſick or well the day I wrote this letter.

We thank you for your kind condolence. There is a pleaſure in the pity of a friend; but the Lord alone can give true comfort. I hope he will ſanctify the breach, and do us good. Mrs —— exchanges forgiveneſs with you about your not meeting in London; that is, you forgive her not coming to you, and ſhe forgives you entertaining a ſuſpicious thought of her friendſhip (though but for a minute) on account of what ſhe was really unable to do.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

My dear Madam, *Sept.* 1. 1767.

I Shall not ſtudy for expreſſions to tell my dear friend how much we were affected by the news that came laſt poſt. We had, however, the pleaſure to hear that your family was ſafe. I hope this will

find you recovered from the hurry of ſpirits you muſt have been thrown into, and that both you and your papa are compoſed under the appointment of him who has a right to diſpoſe of his own as he pleaſes; for we know that whatever may be the ſecond cauſes and occaſions, nothing can happen to us but according to the will of our heavenly Father. Since what is paſt cannot be recalled, my part is now to pray, that this, and every other diſpenſation you meet with, may be ſanctified to your ſoul's good; that you may be more devoted to the God of your life, and have a clearer ſenſe of your intereſt in that kingdom which cannot be ſhaken, that treaſure which neither thieves nor flames can touch, that better and more enduring ſubſtance which is laid up for believers, where Jeſus their head and ſaviour is. With this in view, you may take joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods.

I think I can feel for my friends; but for ſuch as I hope have a right to that promiſe, that all things ſhall work together for their good, I ſoon check my ſolicitude, and aſk myſelf, Do I love them better, or could I manage more wiſely for them, than the Lord does? Can I wiſh them to be in ſafer or more compaſſionate hands than in his? Will he who delights in the proſperity of his ſervants afflict them with ſickneſs, loſſes, and alarms, except he ſees there is need of theſe things? Such thoughts calm the emotions of my mind. I ſincerely condole you; but the command is, to rejoice always in the Lord. The viſitation was accompanied with mercy. Not ſuch a caſe as that of the late Lady Moleſworth's, which made every one's ears to tingle that heard it. Nor is yours ſuch a caſe as of ſome, who in almoſt every great fire loſe their all, and perhaps have no knowledge of God to ſupport them.

Though our firſt apprehenſions were for you, we almoſt

almoſt forgot you for a moment when we thought of your next door-neighbour, and the circumſtance ſhe was in, ſo unfit to bear either a fright or a removal. We ſhall be in much ſuſpenſe till we hear from you. God grant that you may be able to ſend us good news, that you are all well, at leaſt as well as can be expected after ſuch a diſtreſſing ſcene. If what has happened ſhould give you more leiſure, or more inclination, to ſpend a little time with us, I think I need not ſay we ſhall rejoice to receive you.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

My dear Madam, *Sept.* 3. 1767.

THE vanity of all things below is confirmed to us by daily experience. Amongſt other proofs, one is, the precarioufneſs of our intimacies, and what little things, or rather what nothings, will ſometimes produce a coolneſs, or at leaſt a ſtrangeneſs, between the deareſt friends. How is it that our correſpondence has been dropt, and that, after having written two letters ſince the fire, which removed you from your former reſidence, I ſhould be ſtill diſappointed in my hopes of an anſwer? On our parts I hope there has been no abatement of regard; nor can I charge you with any thing but remiſſneſs. Therefore, waving the paſt, and all apologies on either ſide, let me beg you to write ſoon, to tell us how it is with you, and how you

have been ſupported under the various changes you have met with ſince we ſaw you laſt. I doubt not but you have met with many exerciſes. I pray that they may have been ſanctified to lead you nearer to the Lord, the fountain of all conſolation, who is the only refuge in time of troubles, and whoſe gracious preſence is abundantly able to make up every deficiency and every loſs. Perhaps the reading of this may recall to your mind our paſt converſations, and the ſubjects of the many letters we have exchanged. I know not in what manner to write after ſo long an interval. I would hope your ſilence to us has not been owing to any change of ſentiments, which might make ſuch letters as mine leſs welcome to you. Yet when you had a friend, who I think you believed very nearly intereſted himſelf in your welfare, it ſeems ſtrange, that in a courſe of two years you ſhould have nothing to communicate. I cannot ſuppoſe you have forgotten me; I am ſure I have not forgotten you; and therefore I long to hear from you ſoon, that I may know how to write; and ſhould this likewiſe paſs unanſwered, I muſt ſit down and mourn over my loſs.

As to our affairs, I can tell you the Lord has been and is exceedingly gracious to us: our lives are preſerved, our healths continued, an abundance of mercies and bleſſings on every ſide; but eſpecially we have to praiſe him that he is pleaſed to crown the means and ordinances of his grace with tokens of his preſence. It is my happineſs to be fixed amongſt an affectionate people, who make an open profeſſion of the truth as it is in Jeſus, and are enabled, in ſome meaſure, to ſhew forth its power in their lives and converſation. We walk in peace and harmony. I have reaſon to ſay, the Lord Jeſus is a good maſter, and that the doctrine of free ſalvation,

tion, by faith in his name, is a doctrine according to godlineſs; for through mercy I find it daily effectual to the breaking down the ſtrong holds of ſin, and turning the hearts of ſinners from dead works to ſerve the living God. May the Lord give my dear friend to live in the power and conſolation of his precious truth.

I am, &c.

SEVEN

LETTERS

TO

LETTER I.

March 18. 1767.

I Can truly ſay, that I bear you upon my heart and in my prayers. I have rejoiced to ſee the beginning of a good and gracious work in you; and I have confidence in the Lord Jeſus, that he will carry it on and complete it; and that you will be amongſt the number of thoſe who ſhall ſing redeeming love to eternity. Therefore fear none of the things appointed for you to ſuffer by the way; but gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end. Be not impatient, but wait humbly upon the Lord. You have one hard leſſon to learn, that is, the evil of your own heart: you know ſomething of it, but it is needful that you ſhould know more; for the more we know of ourſelves, the more we ſhall prize and love Jeſus and his ſalvation. I hope what you find in yourſelf by daily experience will humble you, but not diſcourage you; humble you it ſhould, and I believe it does. Are not you amazed ſometimes that you ſhould have ſo much as a hope, that poor and needy as you are, the Lord thinketh of you? But let not all you feel diſcourage you; for if our phyſician is all-mighty, our diſeaſe cannot be deſperate; and if he caſts none out that come to him, why ſhould you fear? Our ſins are many, but his mercies are more: our ſins are great, but his righteouſneſs is greater: we are weak, but he is power. Moſt of our complaints are owing to unbelief, and the remainder of a legal ſpirit; and theſe evils are not removed in a day. Wait on the

Lord,

Lord, and he will enable you to ſee more and more of the power and grace of our high prieſt. The more you know him, the better you will truſt him; the more you truſt him, the better you will love him; the more you love him, the better you will ſerve him. This is God's way: you are not called to buy, but to beg; not to be ſtrong in yourſelf, but in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. He is teaching you theſe things, and I truſt he will teach you to the end. Remember, the growth of a believer is not like a muſhroom, but like an oak, which increaſes ſlowly indeed but ſurely. Many ſuns, ſhowers, and froſts, paſs upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it ſeems dead, it is gathering ſtrength at the root. Be humble, watchful, and diligent in the means, and endeavour to look through all, and fix your eye upon Jeſus, and all ſhall be well. I commend you to the care of the good ſhepherd, and remain, for his ſake,

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

May 31. 1769.

I Was ſorry I did not write as you expected, but I hope it will do now. Indeed I have not forgotten you; you are often in my thoughts, and ſeldom omitted in my prayers. I hope the Lord will make what you ſee and hear while abroad profitable to you, to increaſe your knowledge, to ſtrengthen your faith, and to make you from henceforth well ſatisfied with your ſituation. If I am not miſtaken, you will be ſenſible, that though there

are

are ſome deſirable things to be met with in London preferable to any other place, yet upon the whole, a quiet ſituation in the country, under one ſtated miniſtry, and in connection with one people, has the advantage. It is pleaſant now and then to have opportunity of hearing a variety of preachers, but the beſt and greateſt of them are no more than inſtruments; ſome can pleaſe the ear better than others, but none can reach the heart any farther than the Lord is pleaſed to open it. This he ſhewed you upon your firſt going up, and I doubt not but your diſappointment did you more good than if you had heard with all the pleaſure you expected.

The Lord was pleaſed to viſit me with a ſlight illneſs in my late journey. I was far from well on the Tueſday, but ſuppoſed it owing to the fatigue of riding, and the heat of the weather; but the next day I was taken with a ſhivering, to which a fever ſucceeded. I was then near ſixty miles from home. The Lord gave me much peace in my ſoul, and I was enabled to hope he would bring me ſafe home, in which I was not diſappointed: and tho' I had the fever moſt part of the way, my journey was not unpleaſant. He likewiſe ſtrengthened me to preach twice on Sunday; and at night I found myſelf well, only very weary, and I have continued well ever ſince. I have reaſon to ſpeak much of his goodneſs, and to kiſs the rod, for it was ſweetened with abundant mercies. I thought that had it been his pleaſure I ſhould have continued ſick at Oxford, or even have died there, I had no objection. Though I had not that joy and ſenſible comfort which ſome are favoured with, yet I was quite free from pain, fear and care, and felt myſelf ſweetly compoſed to his will, whatever it might be. Thus he fulfils his promiſe in making our ſtrength equal to our day; and every new trial gives

us

us a new proof how happy it is to be enabled to put our truſt in him.

I hope, in the midſt of all your engagements, you find a little time to read his good word, and to wait at his mercy-ſeat. It is good for us to draw nigh to him. It is an honour that he permits us to pray; and we ſhall ſurely find he is a God hearing prayer. Endeavour to be diligent in the means; yet watch and ſtrive againſt a legal ſpirit, which is always aiming to repreſent him as a hard maſter, watching as it were to take advantage of us. But it is far otherwiſe. His name is Love: he looks upon us with compaſſion; he knows our frame, and remembers that we are but duſt; and when our infirmities prevail, he does not bid us deſpond, but reminds us that we have an Advocate with the Father, who is able to pity, to pardon, and to ſave to the uttermoſt. Think of the names and relations he bears. Does he not call himſelf a Saviour, a Shepherd, a Friend, and a Huſband? Has he not made known unto us his love, his blood, his righteouſneſs, his promiſes, his power, and his grace, and all for our encouragement? Away then with all doubting, unbelieving thoughts; they will not only diſtreſs your heart but weaken your hands. Take it for granted upon the warrant of his word, that you are his, and he is yours; that he has loved you with an everlaſting love, and therefore in loving-kindneſs has drawn you to himſelf; that he will ſurely accompliſh that which he has begun, and that nothing which can be named or thought of ſhall ever be able to ſeparate you from him. This perſuaſion will give you ſtrength for the battle; this is the ſhield which will quench the fiery darts of Satan; this is the helmet which the enemy cannot pierce. Whereas if we go forth doubting and fearing, and are afraid to truſt any farther than we can feel, we are weak as water,

water, and eaſily overcome. Be ſtrong therefore, not in yourſelf, but in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Pray for me, and believe me to be,

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

March 14.

I Think you would hardly expect me to write if you knew how I am forced to live at London. However, I would have you believe I am as willing to write to you as you are to receive my letters. As a proof, I try to ſend you a few lines now, though I am writing to you and talking to Mrs ——— both at once! and this is the only ſeaſon I can have to change a few words with her. She is a woman of a ſorrowful ſpirit: ſhe talks and weeps. I believe ſhe would think herſelf happy to be ſituated as you are, notwithſtanding the many advantages ſhe has at London. I ſee daily, and I hope you have likewiſe learnt, that places and outward circumſtances cannot of themſelves either hinder or help us in walking with God. So far as he is pleaſed to be with us, and to teach us by his Spirit, where-ever we are we ſhall get forward; and if he does not bleſs us and water us every moment, the more we have of our own wiſhes and wills, the more uneaſy we ſhall make ourſelves.

One thing is needful; an humble, dependent ſpirit, to renounce our own wills, and give up ourſelves to his diſpoſal without reſerve. This is the path of peace: and it is the path of ſafety; for he has ſaid, The meek he will teach his way, and thoſe who yield up themſelves to him he will guide with

with his eye. I hope you will fight and pray againſt every riſing of a murmuring ſpirit, and be thankful for the great things which he has already done for you. It is good to be humbled for ſin, but not to be diſcouraged; for though we are poor creatures, Jeſus is a complete Saviour; and we bring more honour to God, by believing in his name, and truſting his word of promiſe, than we could do by a thouſand outward works.

I pray the Lord to ſhine upon your ſoul, and to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. Remember to pray for us, that we may be brought home to you in peace.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

London, Aug. 19. 1775.

YOU ſee I am mindful of my promiſe, and glad ſhould I be to write ſomething that the Lord may be pleaſed to make a word in ſeaſon. I went yeſterday into the pulpit very dry and heartleſs. I ſeemed to have fixed upon a text, but when I came to the pinch, it was ſo ſhut up that I could not preach from it. I had hardly a minute to chooſe, and therefore was forced to ſnatch at that which came firſt upon my mind, which proved 2 Tim. i. 12. Thus I ſet off at a venture, having no reſource but in the Lord's mercy and faithfulneſs; and indeed what other can we wiſh for? Preſently my ſubject opened, and I know not when I have been favoured with more liberty. Why do I tell you this? Only as an inſtance of his goodneſs,

neſs, to encourage you to put your ſtrength in him, and not to be afraid, even when you feel your own weakneſs and inſufficiency moſt ſenſibly. We are never more ſafe, never have more reaſon to expect the Lord's help, than when we are moſt ſenſible that we can do nothing without him. This was the leſſon Paul learnt, to rejoice in his own poverty and emptineſs, that the power of Chriſt might reſt upon him. Could Paul have done any thing, Jeſus would not have had the honour of doing all. This way of being ſaved entirely by grace, from firſt to laſt, is contrary to our natural wills; it mortifies ſelf, leaving it nothing to boaſt of, and through the remains of an unbelieving, legal ſpirit, it often ſeems diſcouraging. When we think ourſelves ſo utterly helpleſs and worthleſs, we are too ready to fear that the Lord will therefore reject us; whereas in truth ſuch a poverty of ſpirit is the beſt mark we can have of an intereſt in his promiſes and care.

How often have I longed to be an inſtrument of eſtabliſhing you in the peace and hope of the goſpel, and I have but one way of attempting it, by telling you over and over of the power and grace of Jeſus. You want nothing to make you happy, but to have the eyes of your underſtanding more fixed upon the Redeemer, and more enlightened by the Holy Spirit to behold his glory. O, he is a ſuitable Saviour! he has power, authority, and compaſſion to ſave to the uttermoſt. He has given his word of promiſe to engage our confidence, and he is able and faithful to make good the expectations and deſires he has raiſed in us. Put your truſt in him; believe (as we ſay) through thick and thin, in defiance of all objections from within and without. For this Abraham is recommended as a pattern to us. He overlooked all difficulties; he ventured

tured and hoped even againſt hope, in a caſe which to appearance was deſperate; becauſe he knew that he who had promiſed was alſo able to perform.

Your ſiſter is much upon my mind. Her illneſs grieves me; were it in my power I would quickly remove it: The Lord can, and I hope will, when it has anſwered the end for which he ſent it. I truſt he has brought her to us for good, and that ſhe is chaſtiſed by him that ſhe may not be condemned with the world. I hope though ſhe ſays little ſhe lifts up her heart to him for a bleſſing. I wiſh you may be enabled to leave her and yourſelf and all your concerns in his hands. He has a ſovereign right to do with us as he pleaſes, and if we conſider what we are, ſurely we ſhall confeſs we have no reaſon to complain: and to thoſe who ſeek him his ſovereignty is exerciſed in a way of grace. All ſhall work together for good: every thing is needful that he ſends; nothing can be needful that he with-holds. Be content to bear the croſs; others have borne it before you. You have need of patience; and if you aſk, the Lord will give it; but there can be no ſettled peace till our will is in a meaſure ſubdued. Hide yourſelf under the ſhadow of his wings; rely upon his care and power; look upon him as a phyſician who has graciouſly undertaken to heal your ſoul of the worſt of ſickneſſes, ſin. Yield to his preſcriptions, and fight againſt every thought that would repreſent it as deſirable to be permitted to chuſe for yourſelf. When you cannot ſee your way, be ſatisfied that he is your leader. When your ſpirit is overwhelmed within you he knows your path: he will not leave you to ſink. He has appointed ſeaſons of refreſhment, and you ſhall find he does not forget you. Above all, keep cloſe to the throne of grace. If we ſeem to get no good by attempting to draw near him,

we

we may be ſure we ſhall get none by keeping away from him.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

I Promiſed you another letter, and now for the performance. If I had ſaid, it may be, or perhaps I will, you would be in ſuſpenſe; but if I promiſe, then you expect that I will not diſappoint you, unleſs ſomething ſhould render it impoſſible for me to make my word good. I thank you for your good opinion of me, and for thinking I mean what I ſay; and I pray that you may be enabled more and more to honour the Lord, by believing his promiſe: for he is not like a man that ſhould fail or change, or be prevented by any thing unforeſeen from doing what he has ſaid. And yet we find it eaſier to truſt to worms than to the God of truth. Is it not ſo with you? And I can aſſure you it is often ſo with me. But here is the mercy, that his ways are above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. Though we are fooliſh and unbelieving, he remains faithful; he will not deny himſelf. I recommend to you eſpecially that promiſe of God, which is ſo comprehenſive that it takes in all our concernments, I mean, that all things ſhall work together for good. How hard is it to believe, that not only thoſe things which are grievous to the fleſh, but even thoſe things which draw forth our corruptions, and diſcover to us what is in our hearts, and fill us with guilt and ſhame, ſhould in the iſſue work for our good! Yet the Lord has ſaid it. All your pains and trials, all that

that befals you in your own perſon, or that affects you upon the account of others, ſhall in the end prove to your advantage. And your peace does not depend upon any change of circumſtances which may appear deſirable, but in having your will bowed to the Lord's will, and made willing to ſubmit all to his diſpoſal and management. Pray for this, and wait patiently for him, and he will do it. Be not ſurpriſed to find yourſelf poor, helpleſs, and vile; all whom he favours and teaches will find themſelves ſo. The more grace increaſes, the more we ſhall ſee to abaſe us in our own eyes; and this will make the Saviour and his ſalvation more precious to us. He takes his own wiſe methods to humble you, and to prove you, and I am ſure he will do you good in the end.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

September 16. 1775.

WHen you receive this, I hope it will give you pleaſure to think, that if the Lord be pleaſed to favour us with health we ſhall all meet again in a few days. I have met with much kindneſs at London, and many comforts and mercies; however, I ſhall be glad to return home. There my heart lives, let my body be where it will. I long to ſee all my dear people, and I ſhall be glad to ſee you. I ſteal a little time to write another line or two, more to ſatisfy you than for any thing particular I have to ſay. I thank you for your letter. I doubt not but the Lord is bringing you forward, and that you have a good right to ſay to your ſoul, Why art thou caſt down and diſquieted?

Hope

Hope thou in God; for I ſhall yet praiſe him. An evil heart, an evil temper, and the many croſſes we meet with in paſſing through an evil world, will cut us out trouble: but the Lord has provided a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care: the fruit of all is to take away ſin, and the end of all will be eternal life in glory. Think of theſe words; put them in the balance of the ſanctuary; and then throw all your trials into the oppoſite ſcale, and you will find there is no proportion between them. Say then, "Though he ſlay me I will "truſt in him;" for when he has fully tried me I ſhall come forth like gold. You would have liked to have been with me laſt Wedneſday. I preached at Weſtminſter Bridewell. It is a priſon and houſe of correction. The bulk of my congregation were houſebreakers, highwaymen, pickpockets, and poor unhappy women, ſuch as infeſt the ſtreets of this city, ſunk in ſin, and loſt to ſhame. I had a hundred or more of theſe before me. I preached from 1 Tim. i. 15. and began with telling them my own ſtory: this gained their attention more than I expected. I ſpoke to them near an hour and a half. I ſhed many tears myſelf, and ſaw ſome of them ſhed tears likewiſe. Ah! had you ſeen their preſent condition, and could you hear the hiſtory of ſome of them, it would make you ſing, O to grace how great a debtor! By nature they were no worſe than the moſt ſober and modeſt people. And there was doubtleſs a time when many of them little thought what they ſhould live to do and ſuffer. I might have been, like them, in chains, and one of them have come to preach to me, had the Lord ſo pleaſed.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

October 10. 1777.

I Am juſt come from ſeeing A—— N——. The people told me ſhe is much better than ſhe was, but ſhe is far from being well. She was brought to me into a parlour, which ſaved me the painful taſk of going to inquire and ſeek for her among the patients. My ſpirits always ſink when I am within thoſe mournful walls, and I think no money could prevail on me to ſpend an hour there every day. Yet ſurely no ſight upon earth is more ſuited to teach one thankfulneſs and reſignation. Surely I have reaſon, in my worſt times, to be thankful that I am out of hell, out of Bedlam, out of Newgate. If my eyes were as bad as yours, and my back worſe, ſtill I hope I ſhould ſet a great value upon this mercy, that my ſenſes are preſerved. I hope you will think ſo too. The Lord afflicts us at times; but it is always a thouſand times leſs than we deſerve, and much leſs than many of our fellow-creatures are ſuffering around us. Let us therefore pray for grace to be humble, thankful, and patient.

This day twelvemonth I was under Mr W——'s knife: there is another cauſe for thankfulneſs, that the Lord inclined me to ſubmit to the operation, and brought me happily through it. In ſhort, I have ſo many reaſons for thankfulneſs, that I cannot count them. I may truly ſay they are more in number than the hairs of my head. And yet, alas! how cold, inſenſible, and ungrateful! I could make as many complaints as you; but I find no good by complaining, except to him who is able to help me. It is better for you and me to be admiring the compaſſion

compaſſion and fullneſs of grace that is in our Saviour, than to dwell and pore too much upon our own poverty and vileneſs. He is able to help and ſave to the uttermoſt: there I deſire to caſt anchor, and wiſh you to do ſo likewiſe. Hope in God, for you ſhall yet praiſe him.

I am, &c.

FIVE
LETTERS
TO
MR C——.

LETTER I.

Dear Sir, *January* 16. 1775.

THE death of a near relative called me from home in December, and a fortnight's abſence threw me ſo far behind-hand in my courſe, that I deferred acknowledging your letter much longer than I intended. I now thank you for it. I can ſympathiſe with you in your troubles; yet knowing the nature of our calling, that by an unalterable appointment the way to the kingdom lies through many tribulations, I ought to rejoice rather than otherwiſe, that to you it is given, not only to believe, but alſo to ſuffer. If you eſcaped theſe things, whereof all the Lord's children are partakers, might you not queſtion your adoption into his family? How could the power of grace be manifeſt either to you, in you, or by you, without afflictions? How could the corruptions and devaſtations of the heart be checked without a croſs? How could you acquire a tenderneſs and ſkill in ſpeaking to them that are weary, without a taſte of ſuch trials as they alſo meet with? You could only be a hearſay witneſs to the truth, power, and ſweetneſs of the precious promiſes, unleſs you have been in ſuch a ſituation as to need them, and to find their ſuitableneſs and ſufficiency. The Lord has given you a good deſire to ſerve him in the goſpel, and he is now training you for that ſervice. Many things, yea, the moſt important things belonging to the goſpel-miniſtry, are not to be learned by books and ſtudy, but by painful experience.

You muſt expect a variety of exerciſes; but two things he has promiſed you, that you ſhall not be tried above what he will enable you to bear, and that all ſhall work together for your good. We read ſomewhere of a conceited orator, who declaimed upon the management of war in the preſence of Hannibal, and of the contempt with which Hannibal treated his performance. He deſerved it; for how ſhould a man who had never ſeen a field of battle be a competent judge of ſuch a ſubject? Juſt ſo, were we to acquire no other knowledge of the Chriſtian warfare than what we could derive from cool and undiſturbed ſtudy, inſtead of coming forth as able miniſters of the New Teſtament, and competently acquainted with the τα νοηματα, with the devices, the deep laid counſels and ſtratagems of Satan, we ſhould prove but mere declaimers. But the Lord will take better care of thoſe whom he loves and deſigns to honour. He will try, and permit them to be tried in various ways. He will make them feel much in themſelves, that they may know how to feel much for others, according to that beautiful and expreſſive line,

Haud ignara mali, miſeris ſuccurrere diſco.

And as this previous diſcipline is neceſſary to enable us to take the field in a public capacity with courage, wiſdom, and ſucceſs, that we may lead and animate others in the fight, it is equally neceſſary, for our own ſakes, that we may obtain and preſerve the grace of humility, which I perceive with pleaſure he has taught you to ſet a high value upon. Indeed we cannot value it too highly; for we can be neither comfortable, ſafe, nor habitually uſeful, without it. The root of pride lies deep in our fallen nature, and where the Lord has given natural and acquired abilities, it would grow apace,

if

if he did not mercifully watch over us, and ſuit his diſpenſations to keep it down. Therefore I truſt he will make you willing to endure hardſhips, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. May he enable you to behold him with faith holding out the prize, and ſaying to you, Fear none of theſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

We ſail upon a turbulent and tumultuous ſea; but we are embarked on a good bottom, and in a good cauſe, and we have an infallible and almighty pilot, who has the winds and weather at his command, and can ſilence the ſtorm into a calm with a word whenever he pleaſes. We may be perſecuted, but we ſhall not be forſaken; we may be caſt down, but we cannot be deſtroyed. Many will thruſt ſore at us that we may fall, but the Lord will be our ſtay.

I am ſorry to find you are quite alone at Cambridge, for I hoped there would be a ſucceſſion of ſerious ſtudents to ſupply the place of thoſe who are tranſplanted to ſhine as lights in the world. Yet you are not alone; for the Lord is with you, the beſt counſellor and the beſt friend. There is a ſtrange backwardneſs in us (at leaſt in me) fully to improve that gracious intimacy to which he invites us. Alas! that we ſo eaſily wander from the fountain of life to hew out ciſterns for ourſelves, and that we ſeem more attached to a few drops of his grace in our fellow-creatures than to the fullneſs of grace that is in himſelf. I think nothing gives me a more ſtriking ſenſe of my depravity than my perverſeneſs and folly in this reſpect: yet he bears with me, and does me good continually.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir, *March* 1776.

I Know not the length of your college-terms, but hope this may come time enough to find you ſtill reſident. I ſhall not apologiſe for writing no ſooner, becauſe I leave other letters of much longer date unanſwered that I may write ſo ſoon. It gave me particular pleaſure to hear that the Lord helped you through your difficulties, and ſucceeded your deſires. And I have ſympathiſed with you in the complaints you make of a dark and mournful frame of ſpirits afterwards. But is not this upon the whole right and ſalutary, that if the Lord is pleaſed at one time to ſtrengthen us remarkably in anſwer to prayer, he ſhould leave us at another time, ſo far as to give us a real ſenſibility that we were ſupported by his power, and not our own? Beſides, as you feel a danger of being elated by the reſpect paid you, was it not a merciful and ſeaſonable diſpenſation that made you feel your own weakneſs, to prevent your being exalted above meaſure? The Lord, by withdrawing his ſmiles from you, reminded you that the ſmiles of men are of little value, otherwiſe perhaps you might have eſteemed them too highly. Indeed you ſcholars that know the Lord are ſingular inſtances of the power of his grace; for (like the young men in Dan. iii.) you live in the very midſt of the fire. Mathematical ſtudies in particular have ſuch a tendency to ingroſs and fix the mind to the contemplation of cold and unintereſting truth, and you are ſurrounded with ſo much intoxicating applauſe if you ſucceed in your reſearches, that for a ſoul to be kept humble and alive in ſuch a ſituation, is ſuch a proof of the Lord's preſence

preſence and power, as Moſes had when he ſaw the buſh unconſumed in the midſt of the flames. I believe I had naturally a turn for the mathematics myſelf, and dabbled in them a little way; and though I did not go far, my head, ſleeping and waking, was ſtuffed with diagrams and calculations. Every thing I looked at that exhibited either a right-line or a curve ſet my wits a wool-gathering. What then muſt have been the caſe had I proceeded to the interior *arcana* of ſpeculative geometry? I bought my nameſake's *Principia*, but I have reaſon to be thankful that I left it as I found it, a ſealed book, and that the bent of my mind was drawn to ſomething of more real importance before I underſtood it. I ſay not this to diſcourage you in your purſuits; they lie in your line and path of duty, in mine they did not. As to your academics, I am glad that the Lord enables you to ſhew thoſe among whom you live, that the knowledge of his goſpel does not deſpoil you either of diligence or acumen. However, as I ſaid, you need a double guard of grace, to preſerve you from being either puffed up or deadened by thoſe things, which, conſidered in any other view than *quoad hoc*, to preſerve your rank and character in the univerſity while you remain there, are, if taken in the aggregate, little better than a *ſplendidum nihil*. If my poor people at ——— could form the leaſt conception of what the learned at Cambridge chiefly admire in each other, and what is the intrinſic reward of all their toil, they would ſay (ſuppoſing they could ſpeak Latin) *Quam ſuave iſtis ſuavitatibus carere!* How gladly would ſome of them, if ſuch mathematical and metaphyſical lumber could by any means get into their heads, how gladly would they drink at Lethe's ſtream to get it out again! How many perplexities are they freed from by their happy ignorance, which often peſter thoſe to their lives end

who have had their natural proneneſs to vain reaſoning ſharpened by academical ſtudies.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir, *May* 18. 1776.

THough I wiſhed to hear from you ſooner, I put a candid interpretation upon your ſilence, was ſomething apprehenſive for your health, but felt no diſpoſition to anger. Let our correſpondence be free from fetters. Write when you pleaſe, and when you can: I will do the like. Apologies may be ſpared on both ſides. I am not a very punctual correſpondent myſelf, having ſo many letters to write, and therefore have no right to ſtand upon punctilios with you.

I ſympathiſe with you in your ſorrow for your friend's death. Such caſes are very diſtreſſing! But ſuch a caſe might have been our own. Let us pray for grace to be thankful for ourſelves, and ſubmit every thing in humble ſilence to the ſovereign Lord, who has a right to do as he pleaſes with his own. We feel what happens in our own little connections; but O, the dreadful miſchief of ſin! Inſtances of this kind are as frequent as the hours, the minutes, perhaps the moments of every day: and though we know but one in a million, the ſouls of others have an equal capacity for endleſs happineſs or miſery. In this ſituation the Lord has honoured us with a call to warn our fellow-ſinners of their danger, and to ſet before them his free and ſure ſalvation; and if he is pleaſed to make us inſtrumental of ſnatching but one as a brand out of the fire, it is a ſervice of more importance than

to

to be the means of preſerving a whole nation from temporal ruin. I congratulate you upon your admiſſion into the miniſtry, and pray him to favour you with a ſingle eye to his glory, and a freſh anointing of his Holy Spirit, that you may come forth as a ſcribe well inſtructed in the myſteries of his kingdom, and that his word in your mouth may abundantly proſper.

I truly pity thoſe who riſe early and take late reſt, and eat the bread of carefulneſs, with no higher prize and proſpect in view than the obtaining of academical honours. Such purſuits will ere long appear (as they really are) vain as the ſports of children. May the Lord impreſs them with a noble ambition of living to and for him. If theſe adventurers, who are labouring for pebbles under the ſemblance of goodly pearls, had a diſcovery of the pearl of great price, how quickly and gladly would they lay down their admired attainments, and become fools that they might be truly wiſe! What a ſnare have you eſcaped! You would have been poorly content with the name of a mathematician or a poet, and looked no farther, had not he viſited your heart and enlightened you by his grace. Now I truſt you account your former gain but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt the Lord. What you have attained in a way of literature will be uſeful to you if ſanctified, and chiefly ſo by the knowledge you have of its inſufficiency to any valuable purpoſe, in the great concerns of walking with God, and winning ſouls.

I am pleaſed with your fears leſt you ſhould not be underſtood in your preaching. Indeed, there is a danger of it. It is not eaſy for perſons of quick parts duly to conceive how amazingly ignorant and ſlow of apprehenſion the bulk of our congregations generally are. When our own ideas are clear, and our expreſſions proper, we are ready to think we have

have ſufficiently explained ourſelves; and yet perhaps nine out of ten (eſpecially of thoſe who are deſtitute of ſpiritual light) know little more of what we ſay than if we were ſpeaking Greek. A degree of this inconvenience is always inſeparable from written diſcourſes. They caſt our thoughts into a ſtyle which, though familiar to ourſelves, is too remote from common converſation to be comprehended by narrow capacities; which is one chief reaſon of the preference I give, *cæteris paribus*, to extempore preaching. When we read to the people, they think themſelves leſs concerned in what is offered than when we ſpeak to them point blank. It ſeems a good rule, which I have met with ſomewhere, and which perhaps I have mentioned to you, to fix our eyes upon ſome one of the auditory whom we judge of the leaſt capacity; if we can make *him* underſtand, we may hope to be underſtood by the reſt. Let thoſe who ſeek to be admired for the exactneſs of their compoſitions enjoy the poor reward they aim at. It is beſt for goſpel-preachers to ſpeak plain language. If we thus ſingly aim at the glory of our maſter and the good of ſouls, we may hope for the accompanying power of his Spirit, which will give our diſcourſes a weight and energy that Demoſthenes had no conception of.

I can give you no information of a curacy in a better ſituation. But either the Lord will provide you one, or I truſt he will give you uſefulneſs and a competency of health and ſpirits where you are. He who cauſed Daniel to thrive upon pulſe, can make you ſtrong and chearful even in the Fens, if he ſees that beſt for you. All things obey him, and you need not fear but he will enable you for whatever ſervice he has appointed you to perform.

This letter has been a week in hand: many interruptions from without, and indiſpoſitions within.

I

I ſeem to while away my life, and ſhall be glad to be ſaved upon the footing of the thief upon the croſs, without any hope or plea but the power and grace of Jeſus, who has ſaid, I will in no wiſe caſt out. Adieu.

Pray for yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir, *Sept.* 10. 1777.

I Was glad to hear from you at laſt, not being willing to think myſelf forgotten. I ſuppoſed you were ill. It ſeems, by your account, that you are far from well; but I hope you are as well as you ought to be, that is, as well as the Lord ſees it good for you to be. I ſay, I hope ſo; for I am not ſure that the length and vehemence of your ſermons, which you tell me aſtoniſh many people, may not be rather improper and imprudent, conſidering the weakneſs of your conſtitution; at leaſt if this expreſſion of yours be juſtly expounded by a report which has reached me, that the length of your ſermons is frequently two hours, and the vehemence of your voice ſo great that you may be heard far beyond the church-walls. Unwilling ſhould I be to damp your zeal; but I feel unwilling likewiſe that by exceſſive, unneceſſary exertions you ſhould wear away at once, and preclude your own uſefulneſs. This concern is ſo much upon my mind that I begin with it, though it makes me ſkip over the former part of your letter; but when I have relieved myſelf upon this point, I can eaſily ſkip back again. I am perhaps the more ready to credit the report; becauſe I know the ſpirits of you nervous

nervous people are highly volatile. I conſider you as mounted upon a fiery ſteed, and provided you uſe due management and circumſpection, you travel more pleaſantly than we plodding folks upon our ſober, phlegmatic nags; but then, if inſtead of pulling the rein you plunge in the ſpurs, and add wings to the wind, I cannot but be in pain for the conſequences. Permit me to remind you of the Terentian adage, *ne quid nimis*. The end of ſpeaking is to be heard, and if the perſon fartheſt from the preacher can hear, he ſpeaks loud enough. Upon ſome occaſions a few ſentences of a diſcourſe may be enforced with a voice ſtill more elevated, but to be uncommonly loud from beginning to end is hurtful to the ſpeaker, and I apprehend no way uſeful to the hearer. It is a fault which many inadvertently give into at firſt, and which many have repented of too late: when practice has rendered it habitual it is not eaſily corrected. I know ſome think that preaching very loudly and preaching with power are ſynonymous expreſſions, but your judgement is too good to fall in with that prejudice. If I was a good Grecian I would ſend you a quotation from Homer, where he deſcribes the eloquence of Neſtor, and compares it, if I remember right, not to a thunder-ſtorm or a hurricane, but to a fall of ſnow, which, though preſſing, inſinuating, and penetrating, is ſoft and gentle. You know the paſſage: I think the ſimile is beautiful and expreſſive.

Secondly (as we ſay) as to long preaching. There is ſtill in being an old-faſhioned inſtrument called an hour-glaſs, which in days of yore, before clocks and watches abounded, uſed to be the meaſure of many a good ſermon, and I think it a tolerable ſtint. I cannot wind up my ends to my own ſatisfaction in a much ſhorter time, nor am I pleaſed with myſelf if I greatly exceed it. If an angel

was

was to preach for two hours, unleſs his hearers were angels likewiſe, I believe the greater part of them would wiſh he had done. It is a ſhame it ſhould be ſo, but ſo it is, partly through the weakneſs and partly through the wickedneſs of the fleſh, we can ſeldom ſtretch our attention to ſpiritual things for two hours together without cracking it, and hurting its ſpring; and when wearineſs begins, edification ends. Perhaps it is better to feed our people like chickens, a little and often, than to cram them like turkeys, till they cannot hold one gobbet more. Beſides, over long ſermons break in upon family-concerns, and often call off the thoughts from the ſermon to the pudding at home, which is in danger of being over-boiled. They leave likewiſe but little time for ſecret or family-religion, which are both very good in their place, and are intitled to a ſhare in the Lord's day. Upon the preacher they muſt have a bad effect, and tend to wear him down before his time: and I have known ſome, by over-acting at firſt, have been conſtrained to ſit ſtill and do little or nothing for months or years afterwards. I rather recommend to you the advice of your brother Cantab. Hobſon the carrier, So to ſet out that you may hold out to your journey's end.

Now, if Fame with her hundred mouths has brought me a falſe report of you, and you are not guilty of preaching either too long or too loud, ſtill I am not willing my remonſtrance may ſtand for nothing. I deſire you will accept it, and thank me for it, as a proof of my love to you, and likewiſe of the ſincerity of my friendſhip; for if I had wiſhed to flatter you, I could eaſily have called another ſubject.

I have one more report to trouble you with, becauſe it troubles me; and therefore you muſt bear a part of my burden. Aſſure me it is falſe, and I will

will ſend you one of the handſomeſt letters I can deviſe by way of thanks. It is reported, then, (but I will not believe it till you ſay I muſt), that you ſtand upon your tiptoes, upon the point of being whirled out of our vortex, and hurried away, comet-like, into the regions of eccentricity: in plain Engliſh, that you have a hankering to be an itinerant. If this be true, I will not be the firſt to tell it in St John's college, or to publiſh it on the banks of Cam, leſt the mathematicians rejoice and the poets triumph. But to be ſerious, for it is a ſerious ſubject; let me beg you to deliberate well, and to pray earneſtly before you take this ſtep. Be afraid of acting in your own ſpirit, or under a wrong impreſſion; however honeſtly you mean, you may be miſtaken. The Lord has given you a little charge; be faithful in it, and in his good time he will advance you to a greater: but let his Providence evidently open the door for you, and be afraid of moving one ſtep before the cloud and pillar. I have had my warm fits and deſires of this ſort in my time; but I have reaſon to be thankful that I was held in with a ſtrong hand. I wiſh there were more itinerant preachers. If a man has grace and zeal, and but little fund, let him go and diffuſe the ſubſtance of a dozen ſermons over as many counties; but you have natural and acquired abilities, which qualify you for the more difficult, and, in my judgement, not leſs important, ſtation of a parochial miniſter. I wiſh you to be a burning, ſhining, ſteady light. You may perhaps have leſs popularity, that is, you will be leſs expoſed to the workings of ſelf and the ſnares of Satan, if you ſtay with us; but I think you may live in the full exerciſe of your gifts and graces, be more conſiſtent with your voluntary engagements, and have more peace of mind, and humble intercourſe with God, in watching over a flock which he has committed to you, than by forſaking

ſaking them, to wander up and down the earth without a determined ſcope.

Thus far I have been more attentive to the *utile* than the *dulce*. I ſhould now return to join you in celebrating the praiſes of poetry, and the other ſubjects of your letter; but time and paper fail together. Let me hear from you ſoon, or I ſhall fear I have diſpleaſed you, which, fond as I am of poetry, would give me more pain than I ever found pleaſure in reading Alexander's Feaſt. Indeed I love you; I often meaſure over the walks we have taken together; and when I come to a favourite ſtile, or ſuch a favourite ſpot upon the hill-top, I am reminded of ſomething that paſſed, and ſay, or at leaſt think, *Hic ſtetit* C——.

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir,

BY your flying letter from London, as well as by your more particular anſwer to my laſt, I judge that what I formerly wrote will anſwer no other end than to be a teſtimony of my fidelity and friendſhip. I am ready to think you were ſo far determined before you applied to the Biſhop, as to be rather pleaſed than diſappointed by a refuſal which ſeemed to afford you liberty to preach at large. As your *teſtimonium* was not counterſigned, the conſequence was no other than might have been expected; yet I have been told, (how true I know not), that the Biſhop would have paſſed over the informality, if you had not, unaſked by him, avowed yourſelf a Methodiſt. I think, if you had been

been unwilling to throw hindrances in your own way, the moſt perfect ſimplicity would have required no more of you than to have given a plain and honeſt anſwer to ſuch queſtions as he might think proper to propoſe. You might have aſſiſted Mr ——— for a ſeaſon without being in full orders; and you may ſtill, if you are not reſolved at all events to puſh out. He wrote to me about you, and you may eaſily judge what anſwer I gave. I have heard from him a ſecond time, and he laments that he cannot have you. I likewiſe lament that you cannot be with him. I think you would have loved him; and I hoped his acquaintance might not have proved unuſeful to you.

If you have not actually paſſed the Rubicon, if there be yet room for deliberation, I once more intreat you to pauſe and conſider. In many reſpects I ought to be willing to learn from you; but in one point I have a little advantage of you; I am ſome years older, both in life and in profeſſion; and in this difference of time perhaps I have learned ſomething more of the heart, the world, and the devices of Satan, than you have had opportunity for. I hope I would not damp your zeal, but I will pray the Lord to direct it into the beſt channel for permanent uſefulneſs; I ſay permanent; I doubt not that you would be uſeful in the itinerant way; but I more and more obſerve great inconveniencies follow in that way. Where you make a gathering of people, others will follow you; and if they all poſſeſſed your ſpirit, and had your diſintereſted views, it might be well. But generally an able preacher only ſo far awakens people to a deſire to hear, as expoſes them to the incurſions of various winds of doctrine, and the attempts of injudicious pretenders, who will reſemble you in nothing but your eagerneſs to poſt from place to place. From ſuch meaſures in time proceed errors, parties, contentions, offences,

offences, enthuſiaſm, ſpiritual pride, and a noiſy oſtentatious form of godlineſs, but little of that power and life of faith which ſhews itſelf by humility, meekneſs, and love.

A parochial miniſter, who lives among his people, who ſees and converſes with them frequently, and exemplifies his doctrine in their view by his practice, having knowledge of their ſtates, trials, growth, and dangers, ſuits himſelf to their various occaſions, and, by the bleſſing of God, builds them up, and brings them forward in faith and holineſs. He is inſtrumental in forming their experience; he leads them to a ſolid, orderly, ſcriptural knowledge of divine things. If his name is not in ſo many mouths as that of the itinerant, it is upon the hearts of the people of his charge. He lives with them as a father with his children. His ſteady conſiſtent behaviour ſilences in ſome meaſure the clamours of his enemies; and the Lord opens him doors of occaſional uſefulneſs in many places, without provoking our ſuperiors to diſcountenance other young men who are ſeeking Orders.

I now wiſh I had taken larger paper, for I have not room for all I would ſay. I have no end to ſerve. I am of no party. I wiſh well to irregulars and itinerants who love and preach the goſpel. I am content that they ſhould labour that way, who have not talents nor fund to ſupport the character and fill up the office of a parochial miniſter. But I think you are qualified for more important ſervice. If you had patient faith to wait a while for the Lord's opening, I doubt not but you might yet obtain Prieſt's Orders. We are haſty, like children; but God often appoints us a waiting time. Perhaps it requires as much or more grace to wait than to be active; for it is more trying to ſelf. After all, whatever courſe you take, I ſhall love you, pray for you, and be glad to ſee you.

I am, &c.

EIGHT

been unwilling to throw hindrances in your own way, the moſt perfect ſimplicity would have required no more of you than to have given a plain and honeſt anſwer to ſuch queſtions as he might think proper to propoſe. You might have aſſiſted Mr ——— for a ſeaſon without being in full orders; and you may ſtill, if you are not reſolved at all events to puſh out. He wrote to me about you, and you may eaſily judge what anſwer I gave. I have heard from him a ſecond time, and he laments that he cannot have you. I likewiſe lament that you cannot be with him. I think you would have loved him; and I hoped his acquaintance might not have proved unuſeful to you.

If you have not actually paſſed the Rubicon, if there be yet room for deliberation, I once more intreat you to pauſe and conſider. In many reſpects I ought to be willing to learn from you; but in one point I have a little advantage of you; I am ſome years older, both in life and in profeſſion; and in this difference of time perhaps I have learned ſomething more of the heart, the world, and the devices of Satan, than you have had opportunity for. I hope I would not damp your zeal, but I will pray the Lord to direct it into the beſt channel for permanent uſefulneſs; I ſay permanent; I doubt not that you would be uſeful in the itinerant way; but I more and more obſerve great inconveniencies follow in that way. Where you make a gathering of people, others will follow you; and if they all poſſeſſed your ſpirit, and had your diſintereſted views, it might be well. But generally an able preacher only ſo far awakens people to a deſire to hear, as expoſes them to the incurſions of various winds of doctrine, and the attempts of injudicious pretenders, who will reſemble you in nothing but your eagerneſs to poſt from place to place. From ſuch meaſures in time proceed errors, parties, contentions, offences,

offences, enthuſiaſm, ſpiritual pride, and a noiſy oſtentatious form of godlineſs, but little of that power and life of faith which ſhews itſelf by humility, meekneſs, and love.

A parochial miniſter, who lives among his people, who ſees and converſes with them frequently, and exemplifies his doctrine in their view by his practice, having knowledge of their ſtates, trials, growth, and dangers, ſuits himſelf to their various occaſions, and, by the bleſſing of God, builds them up, and brings them forward in faith and holineſs. He is inſtrumental in forming their experience; he leads them to a ſolid, orderly, ſcriptural knowledge of divine things. If his name is not in ſo many mouths as that of the itinerant, it is upon the hearts of the people of his charge. He lives with them as a father with his children. His ſteady conſiſtent behaviour ſilences in ſome meaſure the clamours of his enemies; and the Lord opens him doors of occaſional uſefulneſs in many places, without provoking our ſuperiors to diſcountenance other young men who are ſeeking Orders.

I now wiſh I had taken larger paper, for I have not room for all I would ſay. I have no end to ſerve. I am of no party. I wiſh well to irregulars and itinerants who love and preach the goſpel. I am content that they ſhould labour that way, who have not talents nor fund to ſupport the character and fill up the office of a parochial miniſter. But I think you are qualified for more important ſervice. If you had patient faith to wait a while for the Lord's opening, I doubt not but you might yet obtain Prieſt's Orders. We are haſty, like children; but God often appoints us a waiting time. Perhaps it requires as much or more grace to wait than to be active; for it is more trying to ſelf. After all, whatever courſe you take, I ſhall love you, pray for you, and be glad to ſee you.

I am, &c.

EIGHT

EIGHT
LETTERS
TO
MRS ——.

LETTER I.

My dear Madam, *July* — 1764.

THE complaints you make are inſeparable from a ſpiritual acquaintance with our own hearts: I would not wiſh you to be leſs affected with a ſenſe of indwelling ſin. It becomes us to be humbled into the duſt; yet our grief, though it cannot be too great, may be under a wrong direction; and if it leads us to impatience or diſtruſt, it certainly is ſo.

Sin is the ſickneſs of the ſoul, in itſelf mortal and incurable, as to any power in heaven or earth but that of the Lord Jeſus only. But he is the great, the infallible phyſician. Have we the privilege to know his name? Have we been enabled to put ourſelves into his hand? We have then no more to do but to attend his preſcriptions, to be ſatisfied with his methods, and to wait his time. It is lawful to wiſh we were well; it is natural to groan, being burdened; but ſtill he muſt and will take his own courſe with us; and, however diſſatisfied with ourſelves, we ought ſtill to be thankful that he has begun his work in us, and to believe that he will alſo make an end. Therefore, while we mourn, we ſhould likewiſe rejoice; we ſhould encourage ourſelves to expect all that he has promiſed; and we ſhould limit our expectations by his promiſes. We are ſure, that when the Lord delivers us from the guilt and dominion of ſin, he could with equal eaſe free us entirely from ſin, if he pleaſed. The doctrine of ſinleſs perfection is

not to be rejected, as though it were a thing ſimply impoſſible in itſelf, for nothing is too hard for the Lord, but becauſe it is contrary to that method which he has choſen to proceed by. He has appointed that ſanctification ſhould be effected, and ſin mortified, not at once completely, but by little and little; and doubtleſs he has wiſe reaſons for it. Therefore, though we are to deſire a growth in grace, we ſhould at the ſame time acquieſce in his appointment, and not to be diſcouraged or deſpond, becauſe we feel that conflict which his word informs us will only terminate with our lives.

Again, ſome of the firſt prayers which the Spirit of God teaches us to put up, are for a clearer ſenſe of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, and our vileneſs on account of it. Now, if the Lord is pleaſed to anſwer your prayers in this reſpect, though it will afford you cauſe enough for humiliation, yet it ſhould be received likewiſe with thankfulneſs, as a token for good. Your heart is not worſe than it was formerly, only your ſpiritual knowledge is increaſed; and this is no ſmall part of the growth in grace which you are thirſting after, to be truly humbled and emptied and made little in your own eyes.

Farther, the examples of the ſaints recorded in ſcripture prove, (and indeed of the ſaints in general), that the greater meaſure any perſon has of the grace of God in truth, the more conſcientious and lively they have been; and the more they have been favoured with aſſurances of the Divine favour, ſo much the more deep and ſenſible their perception of indwelling ſin and infirmity has always been: ſo it was with Job, Iſaiah, Daniel, and Paul. It is likewiſe common to overcharge ourſelves. Indeed we cannot think ourſelves worſe than we really are; yet ſome things which abate the comfort and alacrity of our Chriſtian profeſſion are

rather

rather impediments than properly ſinful, and will not be imputed to us by him who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but duſt. Thus to have an infirm memory, to be ſubject to diſordered, irregular, or low ſpirits, are faults of the conſtitution, in which the *will* has no ſhare, though they are all burthenſome and oppreſſive, and ſometimes needleſsly ſo, by our charging ourſelves with guilt on their account. The ſame may be obſerved of the unſpeakable and fierce ſuggeſtions of Satan with which ſome perſons are peſtered, but which ſhall be laid to him from whom they proceed, and not to them who are troubled and terrified becauſe they are forced to feel them. *Laſtly*, It is by the experience of theſe evils within ourſelves, and by feeling our utter inſufficiency, either to perform duty or to withſtand our enemies, that the Lord takes occaſion to ſhew us the ſuitableneſs, the ſufficiency, the freeneſs, the unchangeableneſs of his power and grace. This is the inference St Paul draws from his complaints, Rom. vii. 25. and he learnt it upon a trying occaſion from the Lord's own mouth, 2 Cor. xii. 8.—9.

Let us then, dear Madam, be thankful and chearful, and while we take ſhame to ourſelves, let us glorify God, by giving Jeſus the honour due to his name. Though we are poor, he is rich; though we are weak, he is ſtrong; though we have nothing, he poſſeſſes all things. He ſuffered for us; he calls us to be conformed to him in ſufferings. He conquered in his own perſon, and he will make each of his members more than conquerors in due ſeaſon. It is good to have one eye upon ourſelves, but the other ſhould ever be fixed on him who ſtands in the relation of Saviour, Huſband, Head, and Shepherd: In him we have righteouſneſs, peace, and power: He can controul all that we fear; ſo that if our path ſhould be through the

fire or through the water, neither the flood ſhall drown us, nor the flame kindle upon us, and ere long he will cut ſhort our conflicts, and ſay, Come up hither. "Then ſhall our grateful ſongs abound, and every fear be wiped away." Having ſuch promiſes and aſſurances, let us lift up our banner in his name, and preſs on through every diſcouragement.

With regard to company that have not a ſavour of the beſt things, as it is not your choice, I would adviſe you (when neceſſary) to bear it as a croſs: we cannot ſuffer by being where we ought to be, except through our own impatience; and I have an idea, that when we are providentially called amongſt ſuch (for ſomething is due to friends and relations, whether they walk with us or no) that the hours need not be wholly loſt: nothing can paſs but may be improved; the moſt trivial converſation may afford us new views of the heart, new confirmation of ſcripture, and renew a ſenſe of our obligations to diſtinguiſhing grace, which has made us in any degree to differ. I would wiſh when you go amongſt your friends, that you do not confine your views to getting ſafe away from them without loſs, but entertain a hope that you may be ſent to do ſome of them good. You cannot tell what effect a word or a look may have, if the Lord is pleaſed to bleſs it. I think we may humbly hope, that while we ſincerely deſire to pleaſe the Lord, and to be guided by him in all things, he will not ſuffer us to take a journey, or hardly to make a ſhort viſit, which ſhall not anſwer ſome good purpoſe to ourſelves or others, or both. While your gay friends affect an air of raillery, the Lord may give you a ſecret witneſs in their conſciences; and ſomething they obſerve in you, or hear from you, may ſet them on thinking perhaps after you are gone, or after the firſt occaſion has entirely ſlipped your

your memory, Eccleſ. xi. 1. For my own part, when I conſider the power, the freedom of divine grace, and how ſovereign the Lord is in the choice of the inſtruments and means by which he is pleaſed to work, I live in hopes from day to day of hearing of wonders of this ſort. I deſpair of nobody: and if I ſometimes am ready to think ſuch or ſuch a perſon ſeems more unlikely than others to be brought in, I relieve myſelf by a poſſibility that that very perſon, and for that very reaſon, may be the firſt inſtance. The Lord's thoughts are not like ours: in his love and in his ways there are heights which we cannot reach, depths which we cannot fathom, lengths and breadths beyond the ken of our feeble ſight. Let us then ſimply depend upon him, and do our little beſt, leaving the event in his hand.

I cannot tell if you know any thing of Mrs ———. In a letter I received yeſterday ſhe writes thus: —— "I am at preſent very ill with ſome diſ-
"order in my throat, which ſeems to threaten my
"life; but death or life, things preſent or things
"to come, all things are mine, and I am Chriſt's,
"and Chriſt's is God's. O glorious privilege!
"precious foundation of ſoul-reſt and peace,
"when all things about us are moſt troublous!
"Soon we ſhall be at home with Chriſt, where
"ſin, ſorrow, and death have no place; and in
"the mean time our beloved will lead us through
"the wilderneſs. How ſafe, how joyous are we,
"may we be, in the moſt evil caſe!"—If theſe ſhould be ſome of the laſt notes of this ſwan, I think them worth preſerving. May we not with good reaſon ſay, Who would not be a Chriſtian? The Lord grant that you and I, Madam, and yours and mine, may be happy in the ſame aſſurance, when we ſhall have death and eternity near in view.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

My dear Madam, *Sept.* 1764.

YOUR welfare I rejoice in; your warfare I underſtand ſomething of. St Paul deſcribes his own caſe in few words, "Without were fightings, "within were fears." Does not this comprehend all you would ſay? And how are you to know experimentally either your own weakneſs, or the power, wiſdom, and grace of God, ſeaſonably and ſufficiently afforded, but by frequent and various trials? How are the graces of patience, reſignation, meekneſs and faith, to be diſcovered and increaſed but by exerciſe? The Lord has choſen, called, and armed us for the fight; and ſhall we wiſh to be excuſed? Shall we not rather rejoice that we have the honour to appear in ſuch a cauſe, under ſuch a Captain, ſuch a banner, and in ſuch company? A complete ſuit of armour is provided, weapons not to be reſiſted, and precious balm to heal us if haply we receive a wound, and precious ointment to revive us when we are in danger of fainting. Further, we are aſſured of the victory beforehand; and O what a crown is prepared for every conqueror, which Jeſus, the righteous Judge, the gracious Saviour, ſhall place upon every faithful head with his own hand! Then let us not be weary and faint, for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap. The time is ſhort; yet a little while, and the ſtruggle of indwelling ſin, and the contradiction of ſurrounding ſinners ſhall be known no more. You are bleſſed, becauſe you hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; he whoſe name is *Amen* has ſaid you ſhall be filled. To claim the promiſe is to make it our own; yet it is becoming us to practiſe ſubmiſſion and patience,

not

not in temporals only, but alſo in ſpirituals. We ſhould be aſhamed and grieved at our ſlow progreſs, ſo far as it is properly chargeable to our remiſſneſs and miſcarriage; yet we muſt not expect to receive every thing at once, but wait for a gradual increaſe; nor ſhould we forget to be thankful for what we may account a little, in compariſon of the much we ſuppoſe others have received. A little grace, a ſpark of true love to God, a grain of living faith, though ſmall as muſtard-ſeed, is worth a thouſand worlds. One draught of the water of life gives intereſt in and earneſt of the whole fountain. It becometh the Lord's people to be thankful; and to acknowledge his goodneſs in what we have received, is the ſureſt as well as the pleaſanteſt method of obtaining more. Nor ſhould the grief, ariſing from what we know and feel of our own hearts, rob us of the honour, comfort and joy, which the word of God deſigns us, in what is there recorded of the perſon, offices, and grace of Jeſus, and the relations he is pleaſed to ſtand in to his people, Pſal. xxiii. 1. Iſa. liv. 5. Cant. v. 16. John xv. 15. 1 John ii. 1. John xv. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 30. Matt. i. 21.—23. Give me leave to recommend to your conſideration Pſal. lxxxix. 15.—18. theſe verſes may be called the Believer's Triumph: though they are nothing in themſelves, yet having all in Jeſus, they may rejoice in his name all the day. The Lord enable us ſo to do! The joy of the Lord is the ſtrength of his people; whereas unbelief makes our hands hang down, and our knees feeble, diſpirits ourſelves, and diſcourages others; and though it ſteals upon us under a ſemblance of humility, it is indeed the very eſſence of pride. By inward and outward exerciſes the Lord is promoting the beſt deſire of your heart, and anſwering your daily prayers. Would you have aſſurance? The true ſolid aſſurance is to be ob-

tained no other way. When young Chriſtians are greatly comforted with the Lord's love and preſence, their doubts and fears are for that ſeaſon at an end. But this is not aſſurance; ſo ſoon as the Lord hides his face they are troubled, and ready to queſtion the very foundation of hope. Aſſurance grows by repeated conflict, by our repeated experimental proof of the Lord's power and goodneſs to ſave; when we have been brought very low and helped, ſorely wounded and healed, caſt down and raiſed again, have given up all hope, and been ſuddenly ſnatched from danger, and placed in ſafety; and when theſe things have been repeated to us and in us a thouſand times over, we begin to learn to truſt ſimply to the word and power of God, beyond and againſt appearances; and this truſt, when habitual and ſtrong, bears the name of aſſurance;—for even aſſurance has degrees.

You have good reaſon, Madam, to ſuppoſe, that the love of the beſt Chriſtians to an unſeen Saviour is far ſhort of what it ought to be. If your heart be like mine, and you examine your love to Chriſt by the warmth and frequency of your emotions towards him, you will often be in a ſad ſuſpenſe whether or no you love him at all. The beſt mark to judge, and which he has given us for that purpoſe, is to inquire if his word and will have a prevailing, governing influence upon our lives and temper. If we love him, we do endeavour to keep his commandments: and it will hold the other way; if we have a deſire to pleaſe him, we undoubtedly love him. Obedience is the beſt teſt; and when, amidſt all our imperfections, we can humbly appeal concerning the ſincerity of our views, this is a mercy for which we ought to be greatly thankful. He that has brought us to will, will likewiſe enable us to do according to his good pleaſure. I doubt not but the Lord whom you love, and on whom you

you depend, will lead you in a ſure way, and eſtabliſh and ſtrengthen, and ſettle you in his love and grace. Indeed he has done great things for you already. The Lord is your ſhepherd; a comprehenſive word. The ſheep can do nothing for themſelves; the ſhepherd muſt guide, guard, feed, heal, recover. Well for us that our ſhepherd is the Lord Almighty. If his power, care, compaſſion, fullneſs, were not infinite, the poor ſheep would be forſaken, ſtarved, and worried. But we have a ſhepherd full of care, full of kindneſs, full of power, who has ſaid, I will ſeek that which was loſt, and bind up that which was broken, and bring again that which was driven away, and will ſtrengthen that which was ſick. How tender are theſe expreſſions, and how well fulfilled! His ſheep feed in the midſt of wolves, yet are preſerved ſafe; for though they ſee him not, his eye and his heart are upon them. Do we wonder that Daniel was preſerved in the lion's den? Why, it is a common caſe. Which of God's children have not cauſe to ſay, "My ſoul is among lions?" But the angel of the covenant ſtops their mouths, or only permits them to gape and roar, to ſhew their teeth, and what they would do if they might; but they may not, they ſhall not bite and tear us at their own will. Let us truſt him, and all ſhall be well.

As to daily occurrences, it is beſt to believe that a daily portion of comforts and croſſes, each one the moſt ſuitable to our caſe, is adjuſted and appointed by the hand which was once nailed to the croſs for us; that where the path of duty and prudence leads, there is the beſt ſituation we could poſſibly be in at that juncture. We are not required to afflict ourſelves immoderately for what is not in our power to prevent, nor ſhould any thing that affords occaſions for mortifying the ſpirit of ſelf be accounted unneceſſary.——I am, &c.

LETTER III.

1768.

I Have been ſome time hoping to hear from you, but Mr ——— was here laſt Saturday, and informed me that you were ill, or had been ſo very lately. This intelligence prompted me to write as ſoon as I could find leiſure. I think the Lord has ſeen fit to viſit you with much indiſpoſition of late; I ſay *he* has ſeen fit, for all our trials are under his immediate direction, and we are never in heavineſs without a *need be*. I truſt he does and will give you ſtrength equal to your day, and ſweeten what would be otherwiſe bitter with the eſſence of his precious love. I hope ſoon to hear that you are reſtored to health, and that you have found cauſe to praiſe him for the rod.

How happy is the ſtate of a believer, to have a ſure promiſe that all ſhall work together for good in the end, and in the mean time a ſure refuge where to find preſent relief, ſupport, and protection! How comfortable is it when trouble is near, to know that the Lord is near likewiſe, and to commit ourſelves and all our cares ſimply to him, believing that his eye is upon us, and his ear open to our prayers. Under the conduct of ſuch a ſhepherd we need not fear, though we are called to paſs through fire and water, through the valley of the ſhadow of death, he will be with us, and will ſhew himſelf mighty on our behalf. It ſeems almoſt needleſs to ſay, that we were very happy in the company of ——: the only inconvenience was, that it renewed the pain it always gives me to part with them. Though the viſit was full as long as I could poſſibly expect, it ſeemed very ſhort. This muſt be

be the caſe while we are here: our pleaſures are ſhort, interrupted, and mixed with troubles: this is not, cannot be our reſt. But it will not be always the caſe; we are travelling to a better world, where every evil and imperfection ſhall ceaſe; then we ſhall be for ever with the Lord, and with each other. May the proſpect of this bleſſed hope ſet before us revive our fainting ſpirits, and make us willing to endure hardſhips as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt. Here we muſt often ſow in tears, but there we ſhall reap in joy, and all tears ſhall be wiped from our eyes for ever. I hope the converſation of friends whom I ſo greatly love and honour afforded me not only pleaſure but profit; it left a ſavour upon my mind, and ſtirred up my languid deſires after the Lord. I wiſh I could ſay the good effect has remained with me to this hour; but, alas! I am a poor creature, and have had many cauſes of humiliation ſince. But, bleſſed be God! amidſt all my changes I find the foundation ſtands ſure, and I am ſeldom or never left to doubt either of the Lord's love to me, or the *reality* of the deſires he has given me towards himſelf; though when I meaſure my love by the degree of its exerciſe, or the fruits it produceth, I have reaſon to ſit down aſhamed, as the chief of ſinners and the leaſt of all ſaints. But in him I have righteouſneſs and peace, and in him I muſt and will rejoice.

I would willingly fill up my ſheet, but feel a ſtraitneſs in my ſpirit, and know not what further to ſay. O for a ray of divine light to ſet me at liberty, that I might write a few lines worth reading, ſomething that might warm my heart and comfort *yours*. Then the ſubject muſt be Jeſus; but of him what can I ſay that you do not know? Well, though you know him, you are glad to hear of him again and again. Come then, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Let

us adore him for his love, that love which has a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, beyond the graſp of our poor conceptions; a love that moved him to empty himſelf, to take on him the form of a ſervant, and to be obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; a love that pitied us in our loſt eſtate, that found us when we ſought him not, that ſpoke peace to our ſouls in the day of our diſtreſs; a love that bears with all our preſent weakneſs, miſtakes, backſlidings, and ſhortcomings; a love that is always watchful, always ready to guide, to comfort, and to heal; a love that will not be wearied, cannot be conquered, and is incapable of changes; a love that will in the end prevail over all oppoſition, will perfect that which concerns us, and will not leave us till it has brought us perfect in holineſs and happineſs, to rejoice in his preſence in glory. The love of Chriſt: it is the wonder, the joy, the ſong of angels, and the ſenſe of it ſhed abroad in our hearts makes life pleaſant and death welcome. Alas! what a heart have I that I love him no better! But I hope he has given me a deſire to make him my all in all, and to account every thing loſs and droſs that dares to ſtand in competition with him.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

1769.

I Found this morning among my unanſwered letters one from you, but hope I left it among them by miſtake. I am willing, however, to be on the ſure ſide, and would rather write twice than be too

too long ſilent. I heard of your being laid on the bed of affliction, and of the Lord's goodneſs to you there, and of his raiſing you up again. Bleſſed be his name! he is all-ſufficient and faithful; and though he cauſe grief, he is ſure to ſhew compaſſion in ſupporting and delivering. Ah! the evil of our nature is deeply rooted and very powerful, or ſuch repeated, continual corrections and chaſtiſements would not be neceſſary; and were they not neceſſary, we ſhould not have them. But ſuch we are, and therefore ſuch muſt be our treatment; for though the Lord loves us with a tenderneſs beyond what the mother feels for her ſucking child, yet it is a tenderneſs directed by infinite wiſdom, and very different from that weak indulgence which in parents we call fondneſs, which leads them to comply with their children's deſires and inclinations, rather than to act with a ſteady view to their true welfare. The Lord loves his children, and is very indulgent to them ſo far as they can ſafely bear it, but he will not ſpoil them. Their ſin-ſickneſs requires medicines, ſome of which are very unpalatable; but when the caſe calls for ſuch, no ſhort-ſighted intreaties of ours can excuſe us from taking what he prepares for our good. But every doſe is prepared by his own hand, and not one is adminiſtered in vain, nor is it repeated any oftener than is needful to anſwer the purpoſed end. Till then, no other hand can remove what he lays upon us; but when his merciful deſign is anſwered, he will relieve us himſelf; and in the mean time he will ſo moderate the operation, or increaſe our ability to bear, that we ſhall not be overpowered. It is true, without a ſingle exception, that all his paths are mercy and truth to them that fear him. His love is the ſame, when he wounds as when he heals, when he takes away as when he gives: we have reaſon to thank him for *all*, but *moſt for the ſevere*.

I received a letter from you which mentions dear Mrs ——'s caſe, a very trying one; but in this likewiſe we ſee the Lord's faithfulneſs. Our own experience, and all that we obſerve of his dealings with others, may convince us that we need not be afraid to intruſt ourſelves and our deareſt concerns in his hands; for he can and will make every thing work for good.

How little does the world know of that intercourſe which is carried on between heaven and earth; what petitions are daily preſented, and what anſwers are received at a throne of grace. O the bleſſed privilege of prayer! O the wonderful love, care, attention, and power of our great Shepherd! His eye is always upon us; when our ſpirits are almoſt overwhelmed within us, he knoweth our path. His ear is always open to us; let who will overlook and diſappoint us, he will not. When means and hope fail, when every thing looks dark upon us, when we ſeem ſhut up on every ſide, when we are brought to the loweſt ebb, ſtill our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. To him all things are poſſible; and before the exertion of his power, when he is pleaſed to ariſe and work, all hindrances give way and vaniſh like a miſt before the ſun. And he can ſo manifeſt himſelf to the ſoul, and cauſe his goodneſs to paſs before it, that the hour of affliction ſhall be the golden hour of the greateſt conſolation. He is the fountain of life, ſtrength, grace, and comfort, and of his fullneſs his children receive according to their occaſions: but this is all hidden from the world; they have no guide in proſperity, but hurry on as they are inſtigated by their blinded paſſions, and are perpetually multiplying miſchiefs and miſeries to themſelves; and in adverſity they have no reſource, but muſt feel all the evil of affliction, without inward ſupport, and without deriving any advantage

vantage from it. We have therefore cauſe for continual praiſe. The Lord has given us to know his name, as a reſting-place and a hiding-place, a ſun and a ſhield. Circumſtances and creatures may change; but he will be an unchangeable friend. The way is rough, but he trod it before us, and is now with us in every ſtep we take; and every ſtep brings us nearer to our heavenly home. Our inheritance is ſurely reſerved for us, and we ſhall be kept for it by his power through faith. Our preſent ſtrength is ſmall, and without a freſh ſupply would be quickly exhauſted; but he has engaged to renew it from day to day; and he will ſoon appear to wipe all tears from our eyes; and then we ſhall appear with him in glory.

I am very ſorry if our friend Mr —— appears to be aiming to reconcile things that are incompatible. I am indeed afraid that he has been for ſome time under a decline; and, as you juſtly obſerve, we meet with too many inſtances to teach us, that they who expreſs the warmeſt zeal at their firſt ſetting out do not always prove the moſt ſteady and thriving afterwards; yet I am willing to hope in this caſe, that he will revive and flouriſh again. Sometimes the Lord permits thoſe whom he loves to wander from him for a ſeaſon; and when his time comes to heal their backſlidings, they walk more humbly, thankfully, and fruitfully afterwards, from a ſenſe of his abounding mercy, and the knowledge they have by experience acquired of the deceitfulneſs and ingratitude of their hearts. I hope and pray it will be ſo with him. However, theſe things for the preſent are grievous; and uſually before the Lord heals ſuch breaches, he makes his people ſenſible, that it is an evil and bitter thing to forſake him when he led them by the way.

Indeed London is a dangerous and enſnaring place to profeſſors. I account myſelf happy that my lot

is

is caſt at a diſtance from it. It appears to me like a ſea, wherein moſt are toſſed by ſtorms, and many ſuffer ſhipwreck. In this retired ſituation, I ſeem to ſtand upon a cliff; and while I pity thoſe whom I cannot help, I hug myſelf in the thoughts of being ſafe upon the ſhore. Not that we are without our trials here; the evil of our own hearts, and the devices of Satan, cut us out work enough; but we are happily ſcreened from many things which muſt be either burdenſome or hurtful to thoſe who live in the way of them; ſuch as, political diſputes, winds of doctrine, ſcandals of falſe profeſſors, parties for and againſt particular miniſters, and faſhionable amuſements, in ſome meaſure countenanced by the preſence of perſons in other reſpects exemplary. In this view, I often think of our dear friend's expreſſion, upon a certain occaſion, of the difference between London and country grace. I hold it in a twofold ſenſe. By London grace, when genuine, I underſtand grace in a very advanced degree. The favoured few who are kept alive to God, ſimple-hearted, and ſpiritually minded, (I mean eſpecially in genteel life), in the midſt of ſuch ſnares and temptations, appear to me to be the firſt-rate Chriſtians of the land: I adore the power of the Lord in them, and compare them to the young men who walked unhurt in the midſt of the fire. In another ſenſe, the phraſe *London grace* conveys no great idea to me. I think there is no place in the kingdom where a perſon may ſet up for a profeſſor upon a ſmaller ſtock. If people can abſtain from open immoralities, if they will fly to all parts of the town to hear ſermons, if they can talk about the doctrines of the goſpel, if they have ſomething to ſay upon that uſeleſs queſtion, Who is the beſt preacher? if they can attain to a ſpeaking acquaintance with ſome of an acknowledged character, then they expect to paſs muſter. I am afraid there

there are many who, upon no better evidences than theſe, deceive both themſelves and others for a courſe of years. Though I feel not in a writing cue to-day, I have almoſt filled the ſheet ſomehow; and if a line or a word may be a means of ſuggeſting a ſeaſonable and comfortable thought to you, I have my end. Through mercy we are all pretty well. My ſoul is kept alive as it were by miracle. I feel much inward warfare; the enemy thruſts ſore at me, that I may fall; and I have abundant experience of the evil and deceitfulneſs of my heart; but the Lord is gracious, and, in the midſt of all conflicts, I have a peace ſpringing from the knowledge of his power and grace, and a conſideration that I have been helped to commit myſelf to him.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

1769.

WE are much obliged to you for your late viſit; and I am glad to find that the Lord is pleaſed to give you ſome tokens of his preſence when you are with us, becauſe I hope it will encourage you to come again. I ought to be very thankful that our Chriſtian friends in general are not wholly diſappointed of a bleſſing when they viſit us.

I hope the Lord will give me an humble ſenſe of what I am, and that broken and contrite frame of heart in which he delights. This is to me the chief thing. I had rather have more of the mind that was in Chriſt, more of a meek, quiet, reſigned, peaceful,

peaceful, and loving diſpoſition, than to enjoy the greateſt meaſure of ſenſible comforts, if the conſequence ſhould be (as perhaps it would) ſpiritual pride, ſelf-ſufficiency, and a want of that tenderneſs to others which becomes one who has reaſon to ſtyle himſelf the chief of ſinners. I know indeed that the *proper* tendency of ſenſible conſolations is to humble; but I can ſee, that through the depravity of human nature they have not always that effect. And I have been ſometimes diſguſted with an apparent want of humility, an air of ſelf-will and ſelf-importance, in perſons of whoſe ſincerity I could not at all doubt. It has kept me from envying them thoſe pleaſant frames with which they have ſometimes been favoured; for I believe Satan is never nearer us than at ſome times when we think ourſelves neareſt the Lord.

What reaſon have we to charge our ſouls in David's words, "My ſoul, wait thou *only* upon God." A great ſtreſs ſhould be laid upon that word *only*. We dare not entirely ſhut him out of our regards, but we are too apt to ſuffer ſomething to ſhare with him. This evil diſpoſition is deeply fixed in our hearts; and the Lord orders all his diſpenſations towards us with a view to rooting it out; that, being wearied with repeated diſappointments, we may at length be compelled to betake ourſelves to him alone. Why elſe do we experience ſo many changes and croſſes? why are we ſo often in heavineſs? We know that he delights in the pleaſure and proſperity of his ſervants; that he does not willingly afflict or grieve his children; but there is a neceſſity on our parts, in order to teach us that we have no ſtability in ourſelves, and that no creature can do us good but by his appointment. While the people of Iſrael depended upon him for food, they gathered up the manna every morning in the field; but when they would hoard it up in their houſes,

houſes, that they might have a ſtock within themſelves, they had it without his bleſſing, and it proved good for nothing; it ſoon bred worms, and grew offenſive. We may often obſerve ſomething like this occurs both in our temporal and ſpiritual concerns. The Lord gives us a dear friend to our comfort; but ere long we forget that the friend is only the channel of conveyance, and that all the comfort is from himſelf. To remind us of this, the ſtream is dried up, the friend torn away by death, or removed far from us, or perhaps the friendſhip ceaſes, and a coolneſs inſenſibly takes place, we know not *how* or *why*: the true reaſon is, that when we rejoiced amiſs in our gourd, the Lord, for our good, ſent a worm to the root of it. Inſtances of this kind are innumerable; and the great inference from them all, Ceaſe from man, ceaſe from creatures, for wherein are they to be accounted of? My ſoul, wait thou *only*, *only* upon the Lord, who is (according to the expreſſive phraſe, Heb. iv. 13.) he with whom we have to do for ſoul and body, for time and eternity. What thanks do we owe, that though we have not yet attained perfectly this great leſſon, yet we are admitted into that ſchool where alone it can be learnt; and though we are poor, ſlow ſcholars, the great and effectual teacher to whom we have been encouraged and enabled to apply, can and will bring us forward? He communicates not only inſtructions, but capacities and powers. There is none like him; he can make the blind to ſee, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak: and how great is his condeſcenſion and patience! how does he accommodate himſelf to our weakneſs, and teach us as we are able to bear! Though all are very dunces when he firſt receives them, not one was ever turned out as *incapable*, for he makes them what he would have them to be. O that we may ſet him always before us, and conſider

ſider every diſpenſation, perſon, thing, we meet in the courſe of every day as meſſengers from him, each bringing us ſome *line of inſtruction* for us to copy into that day's experience. Whatever paſſes within us or around us may be improved (when he teaches us how) as a perpetual commentary upon his good word. If we converſe and obſerve with this view, we may learn ſomething every moment, where-ever the path of duty leads us, in the ſtreets as well as in the cloſet, and from the converſation of thoſe who know not God (when we cannot avoid being preſent at it) as well as from thoſe who do.

Separation of dear friends is, as you obſerved, hard to fleſh and blood; but grace can make it tolerable. I have an abiding perſuaſion that the Lord can eaſily give more than ever he will take away. Which part of the alternative muſt be my lot, or when, he only knows; but in general I can rely on him to appoint the time, the manner; and I truſt his promiſe of ſtrength ſuited to the day ſhall be made good. Therefore I can for the moſt part rejoice, that all things are in the hand and under the direction of him who knows our frame, and has himſelf borne our griefs and carried our ſorrows in his own body. A time of weeping muſt come, but the morning of joy will make amends for all. Who can expound the meaning of that one expreſſion, "An exceeding and eternal "weight of glory?" The caſe of unconverted friends is ſtill more burdenſome to think of; but we have encouragement and warrant to pray and to hope. He who called *us* can eaſily call others: and he ſeldom lays a deſire of this ſort very cloſely and warmly upon the hearts of his people, but when it is his gracious deſign ſooner or later to give an anſwer of peace. However, it becomes us to be thankful for ourſelves, and to bow our anxieties

anxieties and reaſonings before his ſovereign will, who doth as he pleaſes with his own.

Methinks winter is your ſummer. You have been like the bee, collecting from many flowers; I hope you will carry good ſtore of honey home with you. May you find the Lord there, and he can eaſily ſupply the failure of means and creatures. We cannot be in any place to ſo much advantage as where the call of duty leads. What we cannot avoid may we chearfully ſubmit to, and not indulge a vain thought that we could chuſe a better ſituation for ourſelves (all things conſidered) than he has choſen for us.

When we have opportunity of enjoying many ordinances, it is a mercy to be able to prize and improve them; but when he cuts us ſhort for a ſeaſon, if we wait upon him, we ſhall do well without them. Secret prayer, and the good word, are the chief *wells* from whence we draw the water of ſalvation. Theſe will keep the ſoul alive when creature ſtreams are cut off; but the richeſt variety of public means, and the cloſeſt attendance upon them, will leave us lean and pining in the midſt of plenty, if we are remiſs and formal in the other two. I think David never appears in a more lively frame of mind than when he wrote the 42d, 63d, and 84th Pſalms, which were all penned in a dry land, and at a diſtance from the public ordinances.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

1772.

I Had been wiſhing to hear from you, that I might know where to write. I hope I can aſſure you of a friendly ſympathy with you in your trials. I can in ſome meaſure gueſs at what you feel, from what I have ſeen and felt myſelf in caſes where I have been nearly concerned. But my compaſſion, though ſincere, is ineffectual: if I can pity, I cannot relieve. All I can do is, as the Lord enables me, to remember you both before him. But there is one whoſe compaſſion is infinite. The love and tenderneſs of ten thouſand earthly friends, of ten thouſand mothers towards their ſucklings, if compared with his, are leſs than a drop of water to the ocean: and his power is infinite too. Why then do our ſufferings continue, when he is ſo compaſſionate, and could remove them with a word? Surely, if we cannot give the particular reaſons, (which yet he will acquaint us with hereafter, John, xiii. 7.), the general reaſon is at hand; he afflicts not for his own pleaſure, but for our profit; to make us partakers of his holineſs, and becauſe he loves us.

Judge not the Lord by feeble ſenſe,
But truſt him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a ſmiling face.

I wiſh you much comfort from David's thought, Pſal. cxlii. 3. "When my ſpirit was overwhelmed "within me, thou kneweſt my path." The Lord is not withdrawn to a great diſtance, but his eye is upon

upon you, and he ſees you not with the indifference of a mere ſpectator; but he obſerves with attention, he knows, he conſiders your path: yea, he appoints it, and every circumſtance about it is under his direction. Your trouble began at the hour he ſaw beſt; it could not come before, and he has marked the degree of it to a hair's breadth, and the duration to a minute. He knows likewiſe how your ſpirit is affected; and ſuch ſupplies of grace and ſtrength, and in ſuch ſeaſons as he ſees needful, he will afford. So that when things appear darkeſt, you ſhall ſtill be able to ſay, Though chaſtened, not killed. Therefore hope in God, for you ſhall yet praiſe him.

I ſhall pray that the Bath waters may be beneficial; and that the waters of the ſanctuary there may be healing and enlivening to you all. Our all-ſufficient God can give ſeaſons of refreſhment in the darkeſt hours, and break through the thickeſt clouds of outward (affliction) or diſtreſs. To you it is given not only to believe in Jeſus, but to ſuffer for his ſake: for ſo we do, not only when we are called to follow him to impriſonment or death, but when he enables us to bear afflictive diſpenſations with due ſubmiſſion and patience. Then he is glorified: then his grace and power are manifeſted in us. The world, ſo far as they know our caſe, have a proof before them that our religion is not merely notional, but that there is a power and reality in it. And the Lord's people are encouraged by what they ſee of his faithfulneſs to ourſelves. And there are more eyes upon us ſtill. We are a ſpectacle to the univerſe, to angels as well as to men. Chear up: the Lord has put you in your preſent trying ſituation, that you may have the fairer opportunity of adorning your profeſſion of the goſpel; and though you ſuffer much, he is able to make you abundant amends. Nor need

need I remind you that he has ſuffered unſpeakably more for you: he drank for your ſake a cup of unmixed wrath, and only puts into your hand a cup of affliction mixed with many mercies.

The account you gave of the poor man detained in the inn was very affecting. Such ſcenes are or ſhould be inſtructive, to teach us reſignation under the trials we muſt meet with every day. For not only are we viſited leſs than our iniquities have deſerved, but much leſs than many of our fellow-creatures daily meet with. We need not look about far or long to find others in a worſe ſituation than ourſelves. If a fit of the gout or cholic is ſo grievous and ſo hard to bear, what do we owe to him who delivered us from that place of unutterable torment, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth for ever, without hope or reſpite? and if we cannot help intereſting ourſelves in the groans of a ſtranger, how ought the groans of Jeſus to be as it were continually ſounding in our ears? What are all other ſufferings compared to his? And yet he endured them freely. He needed not to have borne them, if he would have left us to periſh; but ſuch was his love, he died that we might live, and endured the fierceſt agonies that he might open to us the gate of everlaſting peace and happineſs. How amazingly perverſe is my heart, that I can be more affected with a melancholy ſtory in a newſpaper concerning perſons I never ſaw, than with all that I read of his bitter paſſion in the garden and on the croſs, though I profeſs to believe he endured it all for me. O! if we could always behold him by faith as evidently crucified before our eyes, how would it compoſe our ſpirits as to all the ſweets and bitters of this poor life! What a banner would it prove againſt all the ſnares and temptations whereby Satan would draw us into evil; and what a firm ground of con-

fidence

fidence would it afford us amidſt the conflicts we ſuſtain from the working of unbelief and indwelling ſin! I long for more of that faith which is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen, that I may be preſerved humble, thankful, watchful, and dependent. To behold the glory and the love of Jeſus is the only effectual way to participate of his image.

We are to ſet out to-night from the Interpreter's houſe towards the hill *difficulty*, and hope to be favoured with a ſight of the croſs by the way. To ſtand at the foot of it, with a ſoftened heart and melting eyes; to forget our ſins, ſorrows, and burdens, while we are wholly ſwallowed up in the contemplation of him who bore our ſins in his own body upon the tree, is certainly the moſt deſirable ſituation on this ſide the grave. To ſpeak of it, and to ſee it by the light of the Spirit, are widely different things: and though we cannot always enjoy this view, yet the remembrance of what we have ſeen is an excellent means of encouragement to mount the hill, and to face the lions.

I believe I ſhall hardly find leiſure to fill my paper this time. It is now Saturday evening, and growing late. I am juſt returned from a ſerious walk, which is my uſual manner of cloſing the week when the weather is fine. I endeavour to join in heart with the Lord's miniſters and people, who are ſeeking a bleſſing on to-morrow's ordinances. At ſuch times I eſpecially remember thoſe friends with whom I have gone to the houſe of the Lord in company, conſequently you are not forgot. I can venture to aſſure you, that if you have a value for our prayers, you have a frequent ſhare in them, yea, are loved and remembered by many here; but as we are forgetful creatures, I hope you will always refreſh our memory, and quicken our prayers by a yearly viſit. In the morning I ſhall

think of you again. What a multitude of eyes and hearts will be directed to our Redeemer to-morrow! He has a numerous and neceſſitous family, but he is rich enough to ſupply them all, and his tender compaſſions extend to the meaneſt and moſt unworthy. Like the ſun, he can chear and enlighten thouſands and millions at once, and give to each as bountifully as if there were no more to partake of his favour. His beſt bleſſings are not diminiſhed by being ſhared among many. The greateſt earthly monarch would ſoon be poor if he was to give a little (though but a little) to all his ſubjects; but Jeſus has unſearchable, inexhauſtible riches of grace to beſtow. The innumerable aſſembly before the throne have been all ſupplied from his fullneſs, and yet there is enough and to ſpare for us alſo, and for all that ſhall come after us. May he give us an eager appetite, an hunger and thirſt that will not be put off with any thing ſhort of the bread of life; and then we may confidently open our mouths wide, for he has promiſed to fill them.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

1773.

SInce I wrote laſt, the Lord has been gracious to us here. He crowned the laſt year with his goodneſs, and renews his benefits to us every day. He has been pleaſed to bleſs the preaching of his goſpel amongſt us, both to conſolation and conviction; and ſeveral are, I hope, earneſtly ſeeking him, who were lately dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.

Dear

Dear Mr ——— was releaſed from all his complaints the 25th of November. A few days before his death he was enabled to ſpeak more intelligibly than uſual for about a quarter of an hour, and expreſſed a comfortable hope, which was a great ſatisfaction to us; for though we had not the leaſt doubt of his being built upon the rock, it was to us an anſwer to prayer that he could again ſpeak the language of faith; and much prayer had been made on this account, eſpecially that very evening. After that night he ſpoke little, and hardly took any notice, but continued chiefly drowſy till he died. I preached his funeral ſermon from Lam. iii. 31. 32. 33. Mrs L——'s complaint grows worſe and worſe; ſhe ſuffers much in her body, and has much more perhaps to ſuffer; but her conſolations in the Lord abound. He enables her to maintain faith, patience, and ſubmiſſion, in an exemplary manner, and ſhews us, in his dealings with her, that he is all-ſufficient and faithful to thoſe who put their truſt in him. I am glad to hear that you had comfortable ſeaſons while at Bath. It is indeed a great mercy that God's ordinances are eſtabliſhed in that place of diſſipation; and I hope many who go there with no higher view than to drink the Bath waters, will be brought to draw with joy the waters of life from thoſe wells of ſalvation. He does nothing in vain, and when he affords the means, we may confidently hope he will beſtow the bleſſing. The diſſipation of ſpirit you complain of, when you are in a ſtrange place, is I ſuppoſe felt by moſt, if not by all, who can be ſatisfied in no place without ſome token of the Lord's preſence. I conſider it rather as an infirmity than a ſin, ſtrictly ſpeaking; though all our infirmities are ſinful, being the effects of a depraved nature. In our preſent circumſtances new things excite new ideas, and when our uſual courſe of life

is broken in upon, it disjoints and unsettles our thoughts. It is a proof of our weakness: it may and ought to be lamented; but I believe we shall not get the better of it, till we leave the mortal body to moulder into dust. Perhaps few suffer more inconvenience from this article than myself, which is one reason why I love home, and seldom leave it without some reluctance: and it is one reason why we should love heaven, and long for the hour when, at liberty from all incumbrance, we shall see the Lord without a vail, and serve him without distraction. The Lord, by his providence, seconds and confirms the declarations of his word and ministry. Much we read and much we hear concerning the emptiness, vanity, and uncertainty of the present state. When our minds are enlightened by his Holy Spirit, we receive and acknowledge what his word declares to be truth: yet if we remain long without changes, and our path is very smooth, we are for the most part but faintly affected with what we profess to believe. But when some of our dearest friends are taken from us, the lives of others threatened, and we ourselves are brought low with pain and sickness, then we not only *say* but *feel* that this must not, cannot be our rest. You have had several exercises of this kind of late in your family, and I trust you will be able to set your seal to that gracious word, That though afflictions in themselves are not joyous, but grievous, yet in due season they yield the peaceful fruits of righteousness. Various and blessed are the fruits they produce. By affliction prayer is quickened, for our prayers are very apt to grow languid and formal in a time of ease. Affliction greatly helps us to understand the scriptures, especially the promises, most of which being made to times of trouble, we cannot so well know their fullness, sweetness, and certainty, as when we have been in the situation

tuation to which they are ſuited, have been enabled to truſt and plead them, and found them fulfilled in our own caſe. We are uſually indebted to affliction as the means or occaſion of the moſt ſignal diſcoveries we are favoured with of the wiſdom, power, and faithfulneſs of the Lord. Theſe are beſt obſerved by the evident proofs we have that he is near to ſupport us under trouble, and that he can and does deliver us out of it. Iſrael would not have ſeen ſo much of the Lord's arm outſtretched in their behalf, had not Pharaoh oppreſſed, oppoſed, and purſued them. Afflictions are deſigned likewiſe for the manifeſtation of our ſincerity to ourſelves and to others. When faith endures the fire, we know it to be of the right kind; and others, who ſee we are brought ſafe out, and loſe nothing but the droſs, will confeſs that God is with us of a truth, Dan. iii. 27. 28. Surely this thought ſhould reconcile us to ſuffer, not only with patience but with chearfulneſs, if God may be glorified in us. This made the Apoſtle rejoice in tribulation, that the power of Chriſt might be noticed, as reſting upon him and working mightily in him. Many of our graces likewiſe cannot thrive or ſhew themſelves to advantage without trials, ſuch as reſignation, patience, meekneſs, long-ſuffering. I obſerve ſome of the London porters do not appear to be very ſtrong men; yet they will trudge along under a burden which ſome ſtouter people could not carry ſo well: the reaſon is, that they are accuſtomed to carry burdens, and by continual exerciſe their ſhoulders acquire a ſtrength ſuited to their work. It is ſo in the Chriſtian life; activity and ſtrength of grace is not ordinarily acquired by thoſe who ſit ſtill and live at eaſe, but by thoſe who frequently meet with ſomething which requires a full exertion of what power the Lord has given them. So again, it is by our own ſufferings we learn to

pity and ſympathiſe with others in their ſufferings: ſuch a compaſſionate diſpoſition, which excites our feelings for the afflicted, is an eminent branch of the mind which was in Chriſt. But theſe feelings would be very faint, if we did not in our experience know what ſorrows and temptations mean. Afflictions do us good likewiſe, as they make us more acquainted with what is in our own hearts, and thereby promote humiliation and ſelf-abaſement. There are abominations which, like neſts of vipers, lie ſo quietly within, that we hardly ſuſpect they are there till the rod of affliction rouſes them; then they hiſs and ſhew their venom. This diſcovery is indeed very diſtreſſing; yet, till it is made, we are prone to think ourſelves much leſs vile than we really are, and cannot ſo heartily abhor ourſelves and repent in duſt and aſhes.

But I muſt write a ſermon rather than a letter, if I would enumerate all the good fruits which, by the power of ſanctifying grace, are produced from this bitter tree. May we, under our ſeveral trials, find them all revealed in ourſelves, that we may not complain of having ſuffered in vain. While we have ſuch a depraved nature, and live in ſuch a polluted world; while the roots of pride, vanity, ſelf-dependence, ſelf-ſeeking, are ſo ſtrong within us, we need a variety of ſharp diſpenſations to keep us from forgetting ourſelves, and from cleaving to the duſt.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

1774.

THE very painful illneſs which Mrs ——— ſo long endured, had doubtleſs not only prepared you to expect the news of her diſmiſſion, but made you more willing to reſign her. You are bereaved of a valuable friend: but life in her circumſtances was burdenſome; and who can be ſorry to conſider her now as freed from all ſuffering, and poſſeſſed of all happineſs? But beſides this, I truſt the Lord has favoured you with an habitual ſenſe of the wiſdom and propriety of all his appointments; ſo that, when his will is manifeſted by the event, you are enabled to ſay, "All is well." "I was dumb, "and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt "it." She is gone a little before you; and after a few more changes, you will meet her again to unſpeakable advantage, and rejoice together before the throne for ever. There every tear will be wiped away, and you ſhall weep no more. The Lord could have prevented the cauſe of her great ſufferings; but I doubt not he afflicted her in wiſdom and mercy: he could eaſily have reſtored her to health; but the time was haſtening when he purpoſed to have her with him where he is, that ſhe might behold his glory, and have all the deſires he put into her heart abundantly ſatisfied. Precious in his ſight is the death of his ſaints, and every circumſtance under the direction of infinite wiſdom. His ſovereignty forbids us to ſay, Why haſt thou done this? And his love aſſures that he does all things well. I have loſt a friend likewiſe: I believe I may ſay few perſons, not immediately related to her, could value her more highly than myſelf; and

though of late years I could not have the pleaſure of her company, it was a conſtant ſatisfaction to me to know I had ſuch a friend.

Mr T———'s ſickneſs and death followed immediately upon this ſtroke. I doubt not but you have been much affected with this diſpenſation likewiſe. But here again we have the ſame ſtrong hold to retreat to: The Lord has done it. What a pleaſing proſpect of increaſing uſefulneſs is now interrupted! How many will mourn his loſs! Yet we are ſure the work which the Lord had appointed him was finiſhed. They who loved his miniſtry, and were profited by it, are left apparently deſtitute; but Jeſus, the good Shepherd, is able to take care of his own, and will fulfil his promiſe to them all. He has ſaid, Verily they ſhall be fed.

We have had trying and dying times here: half my time almoſt has been taken up with viſiting the ſick. I have ſeen death in a variety of forms, and have had frequent occaſion of obſerving how inſignificant many things, which are now capable of giving us pain or pleaſure, will appear, when the ſoul is brought near to the borders of eternity. All the concerns which relate ſolely to this life will then be found as trivial as the traces of a dream from which we are awakened. Nothing will then comfort us but the knowledge of Jeſus and his love; nothing grieve us but the remembrance of our unfaithful carriage to him, and what poor returns we made to his abundant goodneſs. The Lord forbid that this thought ſhould break our peace! No, faith in his name may forbid our fear, though we ſhall ſee and confeſs we have been unprofitable ſervants. There ſhall be no condemnation to them that are in him; but ſurely ſhame and humiliation will accompany us to the very threſhold of heaven, and ought to do ſo. I ſurely ſhall then be more affected

fected than I am now with the coolneſs of my love, the faintneſs of my zeal, the vanity of my heart, and my undue attachment to the things of time. O theſe clogs, fetters, vales, and mountains, which obſtruct my courſe, darken my views, ſlacken my pace, and diſable me in ſervice! Well it is for me that I am not under the law, but under grace.

To-morrow is the Sabbath. I am uſually glad when it returns, though it ſeldom finds me in that frame of mind which I would deſire. But it is my happineſs to live amongſt many who count the hours from one ordinance to another. I know they pray that I may be a meſſenger of peace, and an inſtrument of good to their ſouls; and I have cauſe to hope their prayers are in a meaſure anſwered. For their ſakes, as much as my own, I am glad to go up to the houſe of the Lord. O that in watering others I may be alſo watered myſelf! I have been praying that to-morrow may be a day of power with you and with us, and with all that love Jeſus in ſincerity; that we may ſee his glory, and taſte his love in the ſanctuary. When it is thus, the Sabbath is a bleſſed day indeed, an earneſt of heaven. There they keep an everlaſting Sabbath, and ceaſe not night or day admiring the riches of redeeming love, and adoring him who waſhed his people from their ſins in his own blood. To have ſuch imperfect communion with them as is in this ſtate attainable in this pleaſing exerciſe, is what alone can make life worth the name. For this I ſigh and long, and cry to the Lord to rend the vail of unbelief, ſcatter the clouds of ignorance, and break down the walls which ſin is daily building up to hide him from my eyes. I hope I can ſay, my ſoul is athirſt for God, and nothing leſs than the light of his countenance can ſatisfy me. Bleſſed be his name for the deſire: it is his own gift, and

he never gives it in vain. He will afford us a taſte of the water of life by the way; and ere long we ſhall drink abundantly at the fountain-head, and have done with complaint for ever. May we be thankful for what we receive, and ſtill earneſtly deſirous of more.

I am, &c.

FIVE

FIVE
LETTERS
TO
MISS D——,

LETTER I.

My dear Miſs, *Auguſt* — 1772.

THE Lord brought us home in peace. My viſit to ——— was agreeable, and I ſhall often think of it with pleaſure; though the deadneſs and dryneſs of my own ſpirit, a good part of the time I was there, proved a conſiderable abatement. I am eager enough to converſe with the Lord's people, when at the ſame time I am backward and indiſpoſed to communion with the Lord himſelf. The two evils charged upon Iſrael of old, a proneneſs to forſake the fountain of living waters, and to truſt to broken ciſterns, (which can do me no good unleſs he ſupplies them), run through the whole of my experience abroad and at home. A few drops of grace in my fellow-worms endear them to me exceedingly. If I expect to ſee any Chriſtian friends, I count the hours till we meet; I promiſe myſelf great benefit; but if the Lord withdraws his influence, the beſt of them prove to me but clouds without water. It was not, however, wholly ſo with me all the time I ſtaid with my friends; but I ſuffer much in learning to depend upon the Lord alone: I have been at this leſſon many a long year; but am ſo poor and dull a ſcholar, that I have not yet made any tolerable progreſs in it. I think I received ſome inſtruction and advantage where I little expected it; I mean at Mr Cox's Muſeum. The efforts of his ingenuity amazed me, while at the ſame time I was ſtruck with their inſignificance. His fine things were curious beyond all I had any idea

idea of; and yet what are they better than toys and amuſements, ſuited to the taſte of children! And notwithſtanding the variety of their motions, they were all deſtitute of life. There is unſpeakably more wiſdom and contrivance in the mechaniſm of a butterfly or a bee, that flies unnoticed in the fields, than in all his apparatus put together. But the works of God are diſregarded, while the feeble imitations of them which men can produce gain univerſal applauſe.

If you and I could make ſelf-moving dragons and elephants, what would it profit us? Bleſſed be God, that he has given us ſome glimpſes of his wiſdom and love! by which our hearts, more hard and lifeleſs by nature than the ſtones in the ſtreet, are conſtrained and enabled to move upwards, and to ſeek after the Lord. He has given us in his word a greater treaſure than all that we ever beheld with our eyes, and a hope which ſhall flouriſh when the earth and all its works ſhall be burnt up. What will all the fine things of men's device be worth in that day?

I think the paſſage you refer to in Mr ——— juſtly exceptionable. His intention is good, and the miſtake he would cenſure very dangerous; but he might have explained himſelf more clearly. I apprehend he and you do not mean the ſame thing by being in the dark. It is not an uncomfortable, but a careleſs frame which he would cenſure. They who walk in darkneſs and ſee no light, and yet are exhorted to ſtay themſelves upon God, Iſa. l. 10. are ſaid to hearken to the voice of his ſervant. Though they cannot ſee the Lord, they are ſeeking and mourning after him, and waiting in the uſe of means, and warring againſt ſin. Mr ——— had another ſet of people in view, who truſt in the notions of goſpel truth, or ſome paſt convictions and comforts; though at preſent they give no evidence

evidence of ſpiritual deſires, but are worldly in their ſpirit and converſation; talk of truſting in the Lord; account it a weakneſs to doubt of their ſtate, and think all is well, becauſe they profeſs to believe the doctrines of grace. In a word, it is the darkneſs of ſin and ſloth, not the occaſional darkneſs of an exerciſed ſoul, againſt which his obſervation is pointed. Or if indeed he meant more than this, we are not obliged to believe him. Remember your privilege; you have the Bible in your hands, and are not bound to follow books or preachers any farther than what they deliver agrees with the oracles of truth. We have great reaſon to be thankful for the inſtructions and writings of ſpiritual men, but they are all fallible even as ourſelves. One is our maſter, even Chriſt: what he ſays we are to receive implicitly; but we do not owe implicit ſubjection to the beſt of our fellow-creatures. The Bereans were commended that they would not take even the Apoſtle Paul upon truſt, but ſearched the ſcriptures to ſee whether theſe things were ſo. May the Lord give us a ſpirit of humility and diſcernment in all things.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

May 4. 1773.

METhinks it is high time to aſk you how you do, to thank you for your laſt letter, and to let you know, that though neceſſity makes me ſlack in writing, yet I can and do often think of you. My ſilence has been ſometimes owing to want of leiſure; and ſometimes, when I could have found leiſure,

leiſure, my harp has been out of tune, and I had no heart to write. Perhaps you are ready to infer, by my ſitting down to write at laſt, that my harp is now well tuned, and I have ſomething extraordinary to offer: beware of thinking ſo, leſt you ſhould be ſadly diſappointed. Should I make myſelf the ſubject, I could give you at preſent but a mournful ditty. I ſuppoſe you have heard I have been ill; through mercy I am now well. But indeed I muſt farther tell you, that when I was ſick I was well; and ſince the Lord has removed my illneſs I have been much worſe. My illneſs was far from violent in itſelf, and was greatly ſweetened by a calm ſubmiſſive frame the Lord gave me under it. My heart ſeemed more alive to him then than it has done ſince my cough, fever, and deafneſs have been removed. Shall I give you another bit of a riddle, that notwithſtanding the many changes I paſs through I am always the ſame? This is the very truth: "In me, that is, in my fleſh, "dwelleth no good thing;" ſo that if ſometimes my ſpirit is in a meaſure humble, lively, and dependent, it is not I am grown better than I was, but the Lord is pleaſed to put forth his gracious power in my weakneſs: and when my heart is dry and ſtupid, when I can find no pleaſure in waiting upon God, it is not becauſe I am worſe than I was before, but only the Lord ſees it beſt that I ſhould feel as well as ſay what a poor creature I am. My heart was once like a dungeon, out of the reach of day and always dark: the Lord by his grace has been pleaſed to make this dungeon a room, by putting windows in it; but I need not tell you, that though windows will tranſmit the daylight into a room, they cannot ſupply the want of it. When the day is gone, windows are of little uſe; when the day returns, the room is enlightened by them again. Thus, unleſs the Lord ſhines, I cannot

not retain to-day the light I had yeſterday; and though his preſence makes a delightful difference, I have no more to boaſt of in myſelf at one time than another; yet when it is dark, I am warranted to expect the return of light again. When he is with me, all goes on pleaſantly; when he withdraws, I find I can do nothing without him. I need not wonder that I find it ſo, for it muſt be ſo of courſe, if I am what I confeſs myſelf to be, a poor, helpleſs, ſinful creature in myſelf. Nor need I be over much diſcouraged, ſince the Lord has promiſed to help thoſe who can do nothing without him, not thoſe who can make a tolerable ſhift to help themſelves. Through mercy he does not ſo totally withdraw, as to leave me without any power or will to cry for his return. I hope he maintains in me at all times a deſire of his preſence; yet it becomes me to wait for him with patience, and to live upon his faithfulneſs, when I can feel nothing but evil in myſelf.

In your letter, after having complained of your inability, you ſay you converſe with many who find it otherwiſe, who can go whenever they will to the Father of mercies with a child-like confidence, and never return without an anſwer, an anſwer of peace. If they only mean that they are favoured with an eſtabliſhed faith, and can ſee that the Lord is always the ſame, and that their right to the bleſſings of the covenant is not at all affected by their unworthineſs, I wiſh you and I had more experience of the ſame privilege. In general, the Lord helps me to aim at it, though I find it ſometimes difficult to hold faſt my confidence. But if they ſpeak abſolutely with reſpect to their frames, that they not only have ſomething to ſupport them under their changes, but meet with no changes that require ſuch ſupport, I muſt ſay it is well that they do not live here; if they did, they would not know

know how to pity us, and we ſhould not know how to underſtand them. We have an enemy at —— that fights againſt our peace, and I know not one amongſt us but often groans under the warfare. I adviſe you not to be troubled by what you hear of other folks experience, but keep cloſe to the written word, where you will meet with much to encourage you, though you often feel yourſelf weary and heavy laden. For my own part, I like that path beſt which is well beaten by the footſteps of the flock, though it is not always pleaſant and ſtrewed with flowers. In *our* way we find ſome hills, from whence we can chearfully look about us; but we meet with deep valleys likewiſe, and ſeldom travel long upon even ground.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

1775.

I Am ſatisfied with your anſwer to my queſtion: we are not proper judges of each other's circumſtances, and I am in ſome meaſure weaned from judging haſtily, that what would not be convenient for me muſt therefore neceſſarily be wrong for another. However, my ſolicitude for your welfare made me venture to drop a hint, as I was perſuaded you would take it in good part. Indeed all ſituations and circumſtances (ſuppoſing them not ſinful in themſelves, and that we are lawfully placed in them) are nearly alike. In London *I* am in a crowd, in the country I am ſure there is a crowd in *me*. To what purpoſe do I boaſt of retirement, when I am peſtered by a legion in every place? How

How often, when I am what I call alone, may my mind be compared to a puppet-ſhew, a fair, a Newgate, or any of thoſe ſcenes where folly, noiſe, and wickedneſs moſt abound? On the contrary, ſometimes I have enjoyed ſweet recollection and compoſure where I could have hardly expected it. But ſtill, though the power be all of the Lord, and we of ourſelves can do nothing, it is both our duty and our wiſdom to be attentive to the uſe of appointed means on the one hand, and on the other, watchful againſt thoſe things which we find by experience have a tendency to damp our fervour, or to diſſipate our ſpirits. A comfortable intimacy with a fellow-worm cannot be maintained without a certain delicacy and circumſpection, a ſtudiouſneſs in improving opportunities of pleaſing, and in avoiding what is known to be offenſive. For though love will make large allowances for involuntary miſtakes, it cannot eaſily brook a ſlight. We act thus as it were by inſtinct towards thoſe whom we dearly love, and to whom we feel ourſelves greatly obliged: and happy are they who are moſt influenced by this ſentiment in their walk before the Lord. But alas! here we are chargeable with ſuch inconſiſtencies as we ſhould be greatly aſhamed of in common life. And well it is for us that the Lord's thoughts and ways are above ours, and that he is infinite in mercy as well as in power; for ſurely our deareſt friends would have been weary of us, and have renounced us long ago, had we behaved to them as we have too often done to him. He is God and not man, and therefore he ſtill waits to be gracious, though we have ſo often trifled with him. Surely we may well ſay with the prophet, "Who is a God like unto thee, that par-"doneth iniquity!" His tenderneſs and forbearance towards his own people (whoſe ſins being committed

ted againſt love, and light, and experience, are more aggravated than others) is aſtoniſhing indeed. But, oh! may the times paſt ſuffice to have grieved his Spirit, and may we be enabled from henceforth to ſerve him with a ſingle eye and a ſimple heart, to be faithful to every intimation of his will, and to make him our All in all!

Mr ——— has been here, and I have been with him at ——— ſince his return. We ſeem glad to be together when we can. When I am with him I feel quite at home and at eaſe, and can tell him (ſo far as I dare tell a creature) all that is in my heart: A plain proof, that union of ſpirit depends no more upon an exact uniformity of ſentiment than on a uniformity of prayers: for in ſome points of doctrine we differ conſiderably; but I truſt I agree with him in the views I have of the excellency, ſuitableneſs, and ſufficiency of the Saviour, and of his right to reign without a rival in the hearts of his redeemed people. An experimental knowledge of Jeſus, as the deliverer from *ſin* and *wrath*, and the author of eternal life and ſalvation to all who are enabled to believe, is a ſufficient ground for union of heart: in this point all who are taught of God are of one mind. But an eager fighting for or againſt thoſe points which are uſually made the ſubjects of controverſy, tends to nouriſh pride and evil tempers in ourſelves, and to alienate our hearts from thoſe we hope to ſpend an eternity with. In heaven we ſhall neither be Diſſenters, Moravians, nor Methodiſts; neither Calviniſts nor Arminians; but followers of the Lamb, and children of the kingdom. There we ſhall hear the voice of war no more.

We are ſtill favoured with health and many temporal bleſſings. My ſpiritual walk is not ſo ſmooth as my outward path; in public I am mercifully ſupported,

ported, in ſecret I moſt ſenſibly feel my own vileneſs and weakneſs; but through all the Lord is gracious.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

January 10. 1775.

THere is hardly any thing in which the Lord permits me to meet with more diſappointment, than in the advantage I am ready to promiſe myſelf from creature-converſe. When I expect to meet any of my Chriſtian friends, my thoughts uſually travel much faſter than my body; I anticipate the hour of meeting, and my imagination is warmed with expectation of what I ſhall ſay and what I ſhall hear: and ſometimes I have had ſeaſons for which I ought to be more thankful than I am. It is pleaſant indeed when the Lord favours us with a happy hour, and is pleaſed to cauſe our hearts to burn within us while we are ſpeaking of his goodneſs. But often it is far otherwiſe with me: I carry with me a diſſipation of ſpirit, and find that I can neither impart or receive. Something from within or from without croſſes my ſchemes, and when I retire I ſeem to have gained nothing but a freſh conviction, that we can neither help or be helped, unleſs the Lord himſelf is pleaſed to help us. With his preſence in our hearts, we might be comfortable and happy if ſhut up in one of the cells of Newgate: without it, the moſt ſelect company, the moſt deſirable opportunities, prove but clouds without water.

I have ſometimes thought of aſking you, whether you

you find that difference between being abroad and at home that I do? But I take it for granted that you do not; your connections and intimacies are I believe chiefly with thoſe who are highly favoured of the Lord, and if you can break through or be upon your guard againſt the inconveniencies which attend frequent changes and much company, you muſt be very happy in them. But I believe, conſidering my weakneſs, the Lord has choſen wiſely and well for me, in placing me in a ſtate of retirement, and not putting it in my power, were it ever ſo much my inclination, to be often abroad. As I ſtir ſo ſeldom, I believe when I do it is not upon the whole to my diſadvantage; for I meet with more or leſs upon which my reflections afterwards may by his bleſſing be uſeful to me, though at the time my viſits moſt frequently convince me how little wiſdom or ſkill I have in improving time and opportunities. But were I to live in London, I know not what might be the conſequence. Indeed I need not puzzle myſelf about it, as my call does not lie there; but I pity and pray for thoſe who do live there, and I admire ſuch of them as, in thoſe circumſtances which appear ſo formidable to me, are enabled to walk ſimply, humbly, and cloſely with the Lord. They remind me of Daniel, unhurt in the midſt of lions, or of the buſh which Moſes ſaw, ſurrounded with flames, yet not conſumed, becauſe the Lord was there. Some ſuch I do know, and I hope you are one of the number.

This is certain, that if the light of God's countenance, and communion with him in love, afford the greateſt happineſs we are capable of, then whatever tends to indiſpoſe us for this purſuit, or to draw a vail between him and our ſouls, muſt be our great loſs. If we walk with him, it muſt be in the path of duty, which lies plain before us when our eye is ſingle, and we are waiting with attention upon his

his word, Spirit, and providence. Now wherever the path of duty leads we are ſafe; and it often does lead and place us in ſuch circumſtances as no other conſideration would make us chuſe. We were not deſigned to be mere recluſes, but have all a part to act in life. Now if I find myſelf in the midſt of things diſagreeable enough in themſelves to the ſpiritual life; yet if, when the queſtion occurs, What doſt thou here? my heart can anſwer, I am here by the will of God; I believe it to be, all things conſidered, my duty to be here at this time rather than elſewhere. If I ſay I am tolerably ſatisfied of this, then I would not burden and grieve myſelf about what I cannot avoid or alter, but endeavour to take all ſuch things up with chearfulneſs, as a part of my daily croſs; ſince I am called, not only to do the will of God, but to ſuffer it: but if I am doing my own will rather than his, then I have reaſon to fear, leſt I ſhould meet with either a ſnare or a ſting at every ſtep. May the Lord Jeſus be with you!

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Madam, *April* 13. 1776.

I Am rather of the lateſt to preſent my congratulation to you and Mr —— on your marriage, but I have not been unmindful of you. My heart has repeatedly wiſhed you all that my pen can expreſs, that the new relation in which the providence of God has placed you may be bleſſed to you in every reſpect, may afford you much temporal comfort, promote your ſpiritual progreſs, and enlarge your

ſphere

ſphere of uſefulneſs in the world and in the church.

By this time I ſuppoſe viſits and ceremonies are pretty well over, and you are beginning to be ſettled in your new ſituation. What an important period is a wedding-day! What an entire change of circumſtances does it produce! What an influence it has upon every day of future life! How many cares, inquietudes, and trials, does it expoſe us to, which we might otherwiſe have avoided! But they who love the Lord, and are guided by his word and providence, have nothing to fear; for in every ſtate, relation, and circumſtance in life, he will be with them, and will ſurely do them good. His grace, which is needful in a ſingle, is ſufficient for a married life. I ſincerely wiſh Mr —— and you much happineſs together; that you may be mutually helps meet, and aſſiſt each other in walking as fellow heirs of the hope of eternal life. Your cares and trials I know muſt be increaſed; may your comforts be increaſed proportionally! They will be ſo, if you are enabled heartily and ſimply to intreat the Lord to keep your heart fixed near to himſelf. All the temporal bleſſings and accommodations he provides to ſweeten life, and make our paſſage through this wilderneſs more agreeable, will fail and diſappoint us, and produce us more thorns than roſes, unleſs we can keep ſight of his hand in beſtowing them, and hold and uſe the gifts in ſome due ſubſerviency to what we owe to the giver. But, alas! we are poor creatures, prone to wander, prone to admire our gourds, cleave to our ciſterns, and think of building tabernacles, and taking our reſt in this polluted world. Hence the Lord often ſees it neceſſary, in mercy to his children, to embitter their ſweets, to break their ciſterns, ſend a worm to their gourds, and draw a dark cloud over their pleaſing proſpects. His word tells us, that all here is vanity, compared

with

with the light of his countenance; and if we cannot or will not believe it upon the authority of his word, we muſt learn it by experience. May he enable you to ſettle it in your hearts, that creature-comforts are precarious, inſufficient, and enſnaring; that all good comes from his hand, and that nothing can do *us* good, but ſo far as he is pleaſed to make it the inſtrument of communicating, as a ſtream, that goodneſs which is in him as a fountain. Even the bread which we eat, without the influence of his promiſe and bleſſing, would no more ſupport us than a ſtone; but his bleſſing makes every thing good, gives a tenfold value to our comforts, and greatly diminiſhes the weight of every croſs.

The ring upon your finger is of ſome value as gold, but this is not much; what makes it chiefly valuable to you is, that you conſider it as a pledge and token of the relation you bear to him who gave it you. I know no fitter emblem of the light in which we ſhould conſider all thoſe good things which the Lord gives us richly to enjoy. When every thing we receive from him is received and prized as a fruit and pledge of his covenant-love, then his bounties, inſtead of being ſet up as rivals, and idols to draw our hearts from him, awaken us to freſh exerciſes of gratitude, and furniſh us with freſh motives of chearful obedience every hour.

Time is ſhort, and we live in a dark and cloudy day. When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold; and we have reaſon to fear the Lord's hand is lifted up in diſpleaſure at our provocations. May he help us to ſet looſe all below, and to be found watching unto prayer for grace to keep our garments undefiled, and to be faithful witneſſes for him in our places! O! it is my deſire for myſelf and for all my dear friends, that whilſt too many ſeem content with a half profeſſion, a name to live,

an outward attachment to ordinances and ſentiments and parties, we may be ambitious to experience what the glorious goſpel is capable of effecting, both as to ſanctification and conſolation, in this ſtate of infirmity; that we may have our loins girded up, our lamps burning, and by our ſimplicity and ſpirituality conſtrain thoſe who know us to acknowledge that we have been with Jeſus, have ſat at his feet, and drank of his Spirit.

I am, &c.

THREE

THREE

LETTERS

TO

MRS H——.

THREE

LETTERS

TO

MRS. H——

LETTER I.

LOng and often I have thought of writing to you: now the time is come. May the Lord help me to ſend a word in ſeaſon! I know not how it may be with you, but *he* does, and to him I look to direct my thoughts accordingly. I ſuppoſe you are ſtill in the ſchool of the croſs, learning the happy art of extracting *real* good out of *ſeeming* evil, and to grow tall by ſtooping. The *fleſh* is a ſad untoward dunce in this ſchool; but grace makes the ſpirit willing to learn by ſuffering; yea, it cares not what it endures, ſo ſin may be mortified, and a conformity to the image of Jeſus be increaſed. Surely when we ſee the moſt and the beſt of the Lord's children ſo often in heavineſs, and when we conſider how much he loves them, and what he has done and prepared for them, we may take it for granted that there is a need-be for their ſufferings. For it would be eaſy to his power, and not a thouſandth part of what his love intends to do for them, ſhould he make their whole life here, from the hour of their converſion to their death, a continued courſe of ſatisfaction and comfort, without any thing to diſtreſs them from within or without. But were it ſo, ſhould we not miſs many advantages? In the firſt place, we ſhould not then be very conformable to our head, nor be able to ſay, As he was, ſo are we in this world. Methinks a believer would be aſhamed to be ſo utterly unlike his Lord. What! The maſter *always* a man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief, and

the ſervant *always* happy and full of comfort! Jeſus deſpiſed, reproached, neglected, oppoſed, and betrayed, and his people admired and careſſed: *he* living in the want of all things, and *they* filled with abundance: *he* ſweating blood for anguiſh, and *they* ſtrangers to diſtreſs: how unſuitable would theſe things be! How much better to be called to the honour of filling up the meaſure of his ſufferings! A cup was put into his hand on our account, and his love engaged him to drink it for us. The wrath which it contained he drank wholly himſelf, but he left us a little affliction to taſte, that we might pledge him, and remember how he loved us, and how much more he endured for us than he will ever call us to endure for him. Again, how could we without ſufferings manifeſt the nature and truth of goſpel-grace? What place ſhould we then have for patience, ſubmiſſion, meekneſs, forbearance, and a readineſs to forgive, if we had nothing to try us either from the hand of the Lord or from the hand of men. A Chriſtian without trials would be like a mill without wind or water; the contrivance and deſign of the wheel-work within ſide would be unnoticed and unknown, without ſomething to put it in motion from without. Nor would our graces grow, unleſs they were called out to exerciſe: the difficulties we meet with not only prove but ſtrengthen the graces of the Spirit. If a perſon was always to ſit ſtill, without making uſe of legs or arms, he would probably wholly loſe the power of moving his limbs at laſt; but by walking and working he becomes ſtrong and active. So in a long courſe of eaſe the powers of the new-man would certainly languiſh; the ſoul would grow ſoft, indolent, cowardly, and faint; and therefore the Lord appoints his children ſuch diſpenſations as make them ſtrive, and ſtruggle, and pant; they

muſt preſs through a croud, ſwim againſt a ſtream, endure hardſhips, run, wreſtle, and fight, and thus their ſtrength grows in the uſing.

By theſe things likewiſe they are made more willing to leave the preſent world, to which we are prone to cleave too cloſely in our hearts when our path is very ſmooth. Had Iſrael enjoyed their former peace and proſperity in Egypt, when Moſes came to invite them to Canaan, I think they would hardly have liſtened to him. But the Lord ſuffered them to be brought into great trouble and bondage, and then the news of deliverance was more welcome; yet ſtill they were but half willing, and they carried a love to the fleſh-pots of Egypt with them into the wilderneſs. We are like them; though we ſay this world is vain and ſinful, we are too fond of it; and though we hope for true happineſs only in heaven, we are often well content to ſtay longer here. But the Lord ſends afflictions one after another to quicken our deſires, and to convince us that this cannot be our reſt. Sometimes if you drive a bird from one branch of a tree he will hop to another a little higher, and from thence to a third; but if you continue to diſturb him, he will at laſt take wing and fly quite away. Thus we, when forced from one creature-comfort, perch upon another, and ſo on; but the Lord mercifully follows us with trials, and will not let us reſt upon any: by degrees our deſires take a nobler flight, and can be ſatisfied with nothing ſhort of himſelf; and we ſay, To depart and be with Jeſus is beſt of all.

I truſt you find the name and grace of Jeſus more and more precious to you; his promiſes more ſweet, and your hope in them more abiding; your ſenſe of your own weakneſs and unworthineſs daily increaſing; your perſuaſion of his all-ſufficiency to guide,

ſupport, and comfort you, more confirmed. You owe your growth in theſe reſpects in a great meaſure to his bleſſing upon thoſe afflictions which he has prepared for you and ſanctified to you. May you praiſe him for all that is paſt, and truſt him for all that is to come.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

THough I have the pleaſure of hearing of you, and ſending a remembrance from time to time, I am willing by this opportunity to direct a few lines to you, as a more expreſs teſtimony of my ſincere regard.

I think your experience is generally of the fearful, doubting caſt. Such ſouls, however, the Lord has given particular charge to his miniſters to comfort. He knows our infirmities, and what temptations mean, and as a good ſhepherd he expreſſes a peculiar care and tenderneſs for the weak of the flock, Iſ. xl. 4. But how muſt I attempt your comfort? Surely not by ſtrengthening a miſtake to which we are all too liable, by leading you to look into your own heart for (what you will never find there) ſomething in yourſelf whereon to ground your hopes, if not wholly, yet at leaſt in part. Rather let me endeavour to lead you out of yourſelf: let me invite you to look unto Jeſus. Should we look for light in our own eyes, or in the ſun? Is it indwelling ſin diſtreſſes you? Then I can tell you (though you know it) that Jeſus died for ſin and ſinners. I can tell you, that his blood

blood and righteouſneſs are of infinite value; that his arm is almighty and his compaſſions infinite: yea, you yourſelf read his promiſes every day, and why ſhould you doubt their being fulfilled? If you ſay you do not queſtion their truth, or that they are accompliſhed to many, but that you can hardly believe they belong to you; I would aſk, what evidence you would require? A voice or an angel from heaven you do not expect. Conſider, if many of the promiſes are not expreſsly directed to thoſe to whom they belong. When you read your name on the ſuperſcription of this letter, you made no ſcruple to open it: why then do you heſitate at embracing the promiſes of the goſpel; where you read that they are addreſſed to thoſe who mourn, who hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, who are poor in ſpirit, &c. and cannot but be ſenſible that a gracious God has begun to work theſe diſpoſitions in your heart. If you ſay, that though you do at times mourn, hunger, &c. you are afraid you do it not enough, or not aright; conſider, that this ſort of reaſoning is very far from the ſpirit and language of the goſpel; for it is grounded on a ſecret ſuppoſition, that in the forgiveneſs of ſin God has a reſpect to ſomething more than the atonement and mediation of Jeſus; namely, to ſome previous good qualifications in a ſinner's heart, which are to ſhare with the blood of Chriſt in the honour of ſalvation. The enemy deceives us in this matter the more eaſily, becauſe a propenſity to the covenant of works is a part of our natural depravity. Depend upon it, you will never have a ſuitable and ſufficient ſenſe of the evil of ſin, and of your ſhare in it, ſo long as you have any ſin remaining in you. We muſt ſee Jeſus as he is, before our apprehenſions of any ſpiritual truth will be complete. But if we know that we muſt periſh without Chriſt, and that he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, we

know enough to warrant us to caſt our ſouls upon him, and we diſhonour him by fearing that when we do ſo he will diſappoint our hope. But if you are ſtill perplexed about the high points of election, &c. I would adviſe you to leave the diſpoſal of others to the great Judge: and as to yourſelf, I think I need not ſay much to perſuade you, that if ever you are ſaved at all, it muſt be in a way of free and abſolute grace. Leave diſputes to others; wait upon the Lord, and he will teach you all things, in ſuch degree and time as he ſees beſt. Perhaps you have ſuffered for taking things too much upon truſt from men. Ceaſe from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils. One is your maſter, even Chriſt. Study and pray over the Bible; and you may take it as a ſure rule, that whatever ſentiment makes any part of the word of God unwelcome to you is juſtly to be ſuſpected. Aim at a chearful ſpirit. The more you truſt God, the better you will ſerve him. While you indulge unbelief and ſuſpicion, you weaken your own hands and diſcourage others. Be thankful for what he has ſhewn you, and wait upon him for more: you ſhall find he has not ſaid, "Seek ye my face in vain." I heartily commend you to his grace and care.

And am, &c.

LETTER III.

AT length, and without farther apology for my ſilence, I ſit down to aſk you how you fare? Afflictions I hear have been your lot; and if I had not heard ſo, I ſhould have taken it for granted: for I believe the Lord loves you; and as many as he loves

loves he chaſtens. I think you can ſay, afflictions have been good for you, and I doubt not but you have found ſtrength according to your day; ſo that though you may have been ſharply tried, you have not been overpowered. For the Lord has engaged his faithfulneſs for this to all his children, that he will ſupport them in all their trials; ſo that the fire ſhall not conſume them, nor the floods drown them, 1 Cor. x. 13. Iſa. xliii. 2.

If you can ſay thus much, cannot you go a little further, and add in the Apoſtle's words, "None "of theſe things move me, neither count I my life "dear. I rather glory in my infirmities, that the "power of Chriſt may reſt upon me; yea, doubt-"leſs I count all things loſs and of no regard, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt "Jeſus my Lord; for when I am weak, then I am "ſtrong." Methinks I hear you ſay, "God, "who comforteth thoſe who are caſt down, has "comforted my ſoul, and as my troubles have "abounded, my conſolations in Chriſt have a-"bounded alſo. He has delivered, he does de-"liver, and in him I truſt that he will yet deliver "me." Surely you can ſet your ſeal to theſe words. The Lord help you then to live more and more a life of faith, to feed upon the promiſes, and to rejoice in the aſſurance that all things are yours, and ſhall ſurely work for your good.

If I gueſs right at what paſſes in your heart, the name of Jeſus is precious to you; and this is a ſure token of ſalvation, and that of God. You could not have loved him, if he had not loved you firſt. He ſpoke to *you*, and ſaid, "Seek my face," before your heart cried to *him*, Thy face, O Lord, will I ſeek. But you complain, "Alas! I love him ſo "little." That very complaint proves that you love him a great deal: for if you loved him but a little, you would think you loved him enough. A

mother loves her child a great deal, yet does not complain for not loving it more; nay, perhaps she hardly thinks it possible. But such an infinite object is Jesus, that they who love him better than parents or child, or any earthly relation or comfort, will still think they hardly love him at all; because they see such a vast disproportion between the utmost they can give him, and what in himself he deserves from them. But I can give you good advice and good news: love him as well as you can now, and ere long you shall love him better. O when you see him as he is, then I am sure you will love him indeed! If you want to love him better now while you are here, I believe I can tell you the secret how this is to be attained: *trust him.* The more you trust him, the better you will love him. If you ask farther, How shall I do to trust him? I answer, *Try him:* the more you make trial of him, the more your trust in him will be strengthened. Venture upon his promises; carry them to him, and see if he will not be as good as his word. But, alas! Satan and unbelief work the contrary way. We are unwilling to try him, and therefore unable to trust him; and what wonder then that our love is faint, for who can love at uncertainties?

If you are in some measure thankful for what you have received, and hungering and thirsting for more, you are in the frame I would wish for myself; and I desire to praise the Lord on your behalf. Pray for us. We join in love to you.

I am, &c.

TWO

TWO
LETTERS
TO
MISS P——.

LETTER I.

Auguſt 17. 1776.

IT is indeed natural to us to wiſh and to plan, and it is merciful in the Lord to diſappoint our plans and to croſs our wiſhes. For we cannot be ſafe, much leſs happy, but in proportion as we are weaned from our own wills, and made ſimply deſirous of being directed by his guidance. This truth (when we are enlightened by his word) is ſufficiently familiar to the judgement; but we ſeldom learn to reduce it into practice, without being trained awhile in the ſchool of diſappointment. The ſchemes we form look ſo plauſible and convenient, that when they are broken we are ready to ſay, What a pity! We try again, and with no better ſucceſs: we are grieved, and perhaps angry, and plan out another, and ſo on: at length, in a courſe of time, experience and obſervation begin to convince us, that we are not more able than we are worthy to chuſe aright for ourſelves. Then the Lord's invitation to caſt our cares upon him, and his promiſe to take care of us, appear valuable; and when *we* have done planning, *his* plan in our favour gradually opens, and he does more and better for us than we could either aſk or think. I can hardly recollect a ſingle plan of mine, of which I have not ſince ſeen reaſon to be ſatisfied, that had it taken place in ſeaſon and circumſtance juſt as I propoſed, it would, humanly ſpeaking, have proved my ruin; or at leaſt it would have deprived me of the greater good the Lord had deſigned for me.

We

We judge of things by their preſent appearances, but the Lord ſees them in their conſequences: if we could do ſo likewiſe, we ſhould be perfectly of his mind; but as we cannot, it is an unſpeakable mercy that he will manage for us, whether we are pleaſed with his management or not; and it is ſpoken of as one of his heavieſt judgements, when he gives any perſon or people up to the way of their own hearts, and to walk after their own councils.

Indeed we may admire his patience towards us. If we were blind, and reduced to deſire a perſon to lead us, and ſhould yet pretend to diſpute with him, and direct him at every ſtep, we ſhould probably ſoon weary him, and provoke him to leave us to find the way by ourſelves if we could. But our gracious Lord is long-ſuffering and full of compaſſion; he bears with our frowardneſs, yet he will take methods both to ſhame and to humble us, and to bring us to a confeſſion that he is wiſer than we. The great and unexpected benefit he intends us, by all the diſcipline we meet with, is to tread down our wills, and bring them into ſubjection to his. So far as we attain to this, we are out of the reach of diſappointment; for when the will of God can pleaſe us, we ſhall be pleaſed every day, and from morning to night; I mean with reſpect to his diſpenſations. O the happineſs of ſuch a life! I have an idea of it; I hope I am aiming at it, but ſurely I have not attained it. Self is active in my heart, if it does not abſolutely reign there. I profeſs to believe that one thing is needful and ſufficient, and yet my thoughts are prone to wander after a hundred more. If it be true, that the light of his countenance is better than life, why am I ſolicitous about any thing elſe? If he be all-ſufficient, and gives me liberty to call him *mine*, why do I go a begging to creatures for help? If he be about my path and bed; if the ſmalleſt, as well as the greateſt events

events in which I am concerned are under his immediate direction; if the very hairs of my head are numbered: then my care (any farther than a care to walk in the paths of his precepts, and to follow the openings of his providence) muſt be uſeleſs and needleſs, yea indeed ſinful and heatheniſh, burdenſome to myſelf, and diſhonourable to my profeſſion. Let us caſt down the load we are unable to carry, and if the Lord be our ſhepherd, refer all and truſt all to him. Let us endeavour to live to him and for him to-day, and be glad that to-morrow, with all that is behind it, is in his hands.

It is ſtoried of Pompey, that when his friends would have diſſuaded him from putting to ſea in a ſtorm, he anſwered, It is neceſſary for me to ſail, but it is not neceſſary for me to live. O pompous ſpeech, in Pompey's ſenſe! He was full of the idea of his own importance, and would rather have died than have taken a ſtep beneath his ſuppoſed dignity. But it may be accommodated with propriety to a believer's caſe. It becomes us to ſay, It is not neceſſary for me to be rich, or what the world accounts wiſe; to be healthy, or admired by my fellow worms; to paſs through life in a ſtate of proſperity and outward comfort;—theſe things may be, or they may be otherwiſe, as the Lord in his wiſdom ſhall appoint: but it is neceſſary for me to be humble and ſpiritual, to ſeek communion with God, to adorn my profeſſion of the goſpel, and to yield ſubmiſſively to his diſpoſal, in whatever way, whether of ſervice or ſuffering, he ſhall be pleaſed to call me to glorify him in the world. It is not neceſſary for me to live long, but highly expedient that whilſt I do live I ſhould live to him. Here then I would bound my deſires; and here, having his word both for my rule and my warrant, I am ſecured from aſking amiſs. Let me have his preſence and his Spirit, wiſdom to know my calling,

and

and opportunities and faithfulneſs to improve them; and as to the reſt, Lord, help me to ſay, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, and how thou wilt.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Dear Madam,

WHat a poor, uncertain, dying world is this! What a wilderneſs in itſelf! How dark, how deſolate, without the light of the goſpel and the knowledge of Jeſus! It does not appear ſo to us in a ſtate of nature, becauſe we are then in a ſtate of enchantment, the magical lantern blinding us with a ſplendid deluſion.

Thus in the deſert's dreary waſte,
By magic pow'r produc'd in haſte,
As old romances ſay,
Caſtles and groves, and muſic ſweet,
The ſenſes of the trav'ller cheat,
And ſtop him in his way;

But while he gazes with ſurpriſe,
The charm diſſolves, the viſion dies,
'Twas but enchanted ground:
Thus, if the Lord our ſpirit touch,
The world, which promis'd us ſo much,
A wilderneſs is found.

It is a great mercy to be undeceived in time; and though our gay dreams are at an end, and we awake to every thing that is diſguſtful and diſmaying, yet we ſee a highway through the wilderneſs,

a

a powerful guard, an infallible guide at hand to conduct us through; and we can diſcern, beyond the limits of the wilderneſs, a better land, where we ſhall be at reſt and at home. What will the difficulties we met by the way then ſignify? The remembrance of them will only remain to heighten our ſenſe of the love, care, and power of our Saviour and leader. O how ſhall we then admire, adore, and praiſe him, when he ſhall condeſcend to unfold to us the beauty, propriety, and harmony of the whole train of his diſpenſations towards us, and give us a clear retroſpect of all the way and all the turns of our pilgrimage!

In the mean while, the beſt method of adorning our profeſſion, and of enjoying peace in our ſouls, is ſimply to truſt him, and abſolutely to commit ourſelves and our all to his management. By caſting our burdens upon him, our ſpirits become light and chearful; we are freed from a thouſand anxieties and inquietudes, which are weariſome to our minds, and which, with reſpect to events, are *needleſs* for us, yea *uſeleſs*. But though it may be eaſy to ſpeak of this truſt, and it appears to our judgement perfectly right and reaſonable, the actual attainment is a great thing; and eſpecially ſo to truſt the Lord, not by fits and ſtarts, ſurrendering one day and retracting the next, but to abide by our ſurrender, and go habitually truſting through all the changes we meet, knowing that his love, purpoſe, and promiſe are unchangeable. Some little faintings perhaps none are freed from; but I believe a power of truſting the Lord in good meaſure at all times, and living quietly under the ſhadow of his wing, is what the promiſe warrants us to expect, if we ſeek it by diligent prayer; if not all at once, yet by a gradual increaſe. May it be your experience and mine.

I am, &c.

FOUR-

FOUR.

FOURTEEN

LETTERS

TO THE

REV. MR B——.

LETTER I.

Dear and Rev. Sir, *Jan.* 27. 1778.

I Call you *dear* becauſe I love you, and I ſhall continue to ſtyle you *Reverend* as long as you dignify me with that title. It is indeed a pretty ſounding epithet, and forms a ſtriking contraſt in the uſual application. The inhabitants of the moon (if there be any) have perhaps no idea how many Reverend, Right Reverend, and Moſt Reverend ſinners we have in Europe. And yet you *are* reverend, and I revere you, becauſe I believe the Lord liveth in you, and has choſen you to be a temple of his preſence, and an inſtrument of his grace.

I hope the two ſermons you preached in London were made uſeful to others, and the medicines you took there were uſeful to yourſelf. I am glad to hear you are ſafe at home and ſomething better. Chearful ſpring is approaching, then I hope the barometer of your ſpirits will riſe. But the preſence of the Lord can bring a pleaſanter ſpring than April, and even in the depth of winter.

At preſent it is January with me, both within and without. The outward ſun ſhines and looks pleaſant, but his beams are faint, and too feeble to diſſolve the froſt. So is it in my heart; I have many bright and pleaſant beams of truth in my view, but cold predominates in my froſt-bound ſpirit, and they have but little power to warm me. I could tell a ſtranger ſomething about Jeſus that would perhaps aſtoniſh him: ſuch a glorious perſon! ſuch wonderful

derful love! ſuch humiliation! ſuch a death! and then what he is now in himſelf, and what he is to his people! What a ſun! what a ſhield! what a root! what a life! what a friend! My tongue can run on upon theſe ſubjects ſometimes; and could my heart keep pace with it, I ſhould be the happieſt fellow in the country. Stupid creature! to know theſe things ſo well, and yet be no more affected with them! Indeed I have reaſon to be upon ill terms with myſelf! It is ſtrange that pride ſhould ever find any thing in my experience to feed upon; but this completes my character for folly, vileneſs, and inconſiſtence, that I am not only poor, but proud; and though I am convinced I am a very wretch, a nothing before the Lord, I am prone to go forth among my fellow-creatures as though I were wiſe and good.

You wonder what I am doing; and well you may: I am ſure you would if you lived with me. Too much of my time paſſes in buſy idleneſs, too much in waking dreams. I aim at ſomething; but hindrances from within and without make it difficult for me to accompliſh any thing. I dare not ſay I am abſolutely idle, or that I wilfully waſte much of my time. I have ſeldom one hour free from interruption. Letters come that muſt be anſwered, viſitants that muſt be received, buſineſs that muſt be attended to. I have a good many ſheep and lambs to look after, ſick and afflicted ſouls, dear to the Lord; and therefore whatever ſtands ſtill, theſe muſt not be neglected. Amongſt theſe various avocations, night comes before I am ready for noon; and the week cloſes, when, according to the ſtate of my buſineſs, it ſhould not be more than Tueſday. O precious, irrecoverable time! O that I had more wiſdom in redeeming and improving thee! Pray for me, that the Lord may teach me to ſerve him better.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER II.

Dear Sir, *April* 28. 1778.

I Was not much diſappointed at not meeting you at home. I knew how difficult it is to get away from ——————, if you are ſeen in the ſtreet after breakfaſt. The horſe-leech has three daughters, ſaying, Give, give: the cry there is, Preach, preach. When you have told them all, you muſt tell them more, or tell it them over again. Whoever will find tongue, they will engage to find ears. Yet I do not blame this importunity; I wiſh you were teaſed more with it in your own town; for though undoubtedly there are too many, both at N—— and here, whoſe religion lies too much in hearing, yet in many it proceeds from a love to the truth, and to the miniſters who diſpenſe it. And I generally obſerve, that they who are not willing to hear a ſtranger (if his character is known) are indifferent enough about hearing their own miniſter.

I beg you to pray for me. I am a poor creature, full of wants. I ſeem to need the wiſdom of Solomon, the meekneſs of Moſes, and the zeal of Paul, to enable me to make full proof of my miniſtry. But, alas! you may gueſs the reſt.

Send me the way to Chriſt. I am willing to be a debtor to the wiſe and unwiſe, to Doctors and Shoemakers, if I can get a hint, or a *Nota Bene*, from any one, without reſpect to parties. When a houſe is on fire, Churchmen, Diſſenters, Methodiſts, Papiſts, Moravians and Myſtics, are all welcome to bring water. At ſuch times, no body aſks, Pray, friend, whom do you hear? or, What do you think of the five points? &c. &c.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

My dear Friend, *July* 7. 1778.

I Know not that I have any thing to ſay worth poſtage, though perhaps, had I ſeen you before you ſet off, ſomething might have occurred which will not be found in my letter. Yet I write a line, becauſe you bid me, and are now in a far, foreign country. You will find Mr —— a man to your tooth, but he is in Mr W———'s connection. So I remember Venerable Bede, after giving a high character of ſome cotemporary, kicks his full pail of milk down, and reduces him almoſt to nothing, by adding in the cloſe to this purpoſe: "But, un-"happy man, he did not keep Eaſter our way!" A fig for all connections, ſay I, and ſay you, but that which is formed by the bands, joints, and ligaments the apoſtle ſpeaks of, Eph. iv. 16. *et alibi.* Therefore I venture to repeat it, that Mr ———, though he often ſees and hears Mr W ——, and I believe loves him well, is a good man; and you will ſee the inviſible mark upon his forehead, if you examine him with your ſpiritual ſpectacles.

Now methinks I do pity you: I ſee you melted with heat, ſtifled with ſmoke, ſtunned with noiſe. Ah! what a change from the brooks and buſhes, and birds and green fields, to which you had lately acceſs. Of old they uſed to retire into the deſerts for mortification. If I was to ſet myſelf a moderate penance, it might be to ſpend a fortnight in London in the height of ſummer. But I forget myſelf: I hope the Lord is with you, and then all places are alike. He makes the dungeon and the ſtocks comfortable, Acts, xvi. yea, a fiery furnace, and a lion's den. A child of God in London ſeems

to

to be in all theſe trying ſituations: but Jeſus can preſerve his own. I honour the grace of God in thoſe few (comparatively few, I fear) who preſerve their garments undefiled in that Sardis. The air is filled with infection, and it is by ſpecial power and miraculous preſervation they enjoy ſpiritual health, when ſo many ſicken and fall around them on the right hand and on the left. May the Lord preſerve you from the various epidemical ſoul diſeaſes which abound where you are, and be your comfort and defence from day to day.

Laſt week we had a lion in town. I went to ſee him. He was wonderfully tame; as familiar with his keeper, as docile and obedient as a ſpaniel. Yet the man told me he had his ſurly fits, when they durſt not touch him. No looking-glaſs could expreſs my face more juſtly than this lion did my heart. I could trace every feature: as wild and fierce by nature; yea, much more ſo: but grace has in ſome meaſure tamed me. I know and love my keeper, and ſometimes watch his looks that I may learn his will. But, oh! I have my ſurly fits too; ſeaſons when I relapſe into the ſavage again, as though I had forgotten all.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

My dear Friend, *July* 13. 1778.

AS we are ſo ſoon to meet, as I have nothing very important to communicate, and many things occur which might demand my time; I have no other plea to offer, either to you or myſelf, for writing again, but becauſe I love you.

I pity the unknown conſiderable miniſter, with whom you ſmoked your morning pipe. But we muſt take men and things as we find them: and when we fall in company with thoſe from whom we can get little other good, it is likely we ſhall at leaſt find occaſion for the exerciſe of patience and charity towards them, and of thankfulneſs to him who hath made us to differ. And theſe are good things, though perhaps the occaſion may not be pleaſant. Indeed a Chriſtian, if in a right ſpirit, is always in his Lord's ſchool, and may learn either a new leſſon, or how to practiſe an old one, by every thing he ſees or hears, provided he does not wilfully tread upon forbidden ground. If he were conſtrained to ſpend a day with the poor creatures in the common ſide of Newgate, though he could not talk with them of what God has done for his ſoul, he might be more ſenſible of his mercy, by the contraſt he would obſerve around him. He might rejoice for himſelf, and mourn over them, and thus perhaps get as much benefit as from the beſt ſermon he ever heard.

It is neceſſary, all things taken together, to have connection more or leſs with narrow-minded people. If they are, notwithſtanding their prejudices, civil to us, they have a right to ſome civility from us. We may love them, though we cannot admire them, and pick ſomething good from them, notwithſtanding we ſee much to blame. It is perhaps the higheſt triumph we can obtain over bigotry, when we are able to bear with bigots themſelves. For they are a ſet of troubleſome folks, whom Mr Self is often very forward to exclude from the comprehenſive candour and tenderneſs which he profeſſes to exerciſe towards thoſe who differ from him.

I am glad your preſent home (a believer ſhould be always at home) is pleaſant; the rooms large and

and airy; your hoſt and hoſteſs kind and ſpiritual; and upon the whole, all things as well as you could expect to find them, conſidering where you are. I could give you much ſuch an account of my uſual head quarters in the city; but ſtill London is London I do not wiſh you to live there, for my own ſake as well as yours; but if the Lord ſhould ſo appoint, I believe he can make you eaſy there, and enable me to make a tolerable ſhift without you. Yet I certainly ſhould miſs you; for I have no perſon in this neighbourhood with whom my heart ſo thoroughly unites in ſpirituals, though there are many whom I love. But converſation with moſt Chriſtians is ſomething like going to court; where, except you are dreſſed exactly according to a preſcribed ſtandard, you will either not be admitted, or muſt expect to be heartily ſtared at. But you and I can meet and converſe, *ſans contrainte*, in an undreſs, without fear of offending, or being accounted offenders, for a word out of place, and not exactly in the pink of the mode.

I know not how it is: I think my ſentiments and experience are as orthodox and calviniſtical as need be; and yet I am a ſort of ſpeckled bird among my Calviniſt brethren. I am a mighty good churchman, but paſs amongſt ſuch as a diſſenter in prunella. On the other hand, the Diſſenters (many of them I mean) think me defective, either in underſtanding or in conſcience, for ſtaying where I am. Well, there is a middle party, called Methodiſts, but neither do my dimenſions exactly fit with them. I am ſomehow diſqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party. But there are a few among all parties who bear with me and love me, and with this I muſt be content at preſent. But ſo far as they love the Lord Jeſus, I deſire, and by his grace I determine (with or without their leave) to love them all. Party-walls, though

ſtronger than the walls of Babylon, muſt come down in the general ruin, when the earth and all its works ſhall be burnt up, if no ſooner.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

My dear Sir, *July* 1778.

I Was glad to hear that you were again within a few miles of me; and I would praiſe the Lord, who led you out and brought you home in ſafety, and preſerved all in peace while you were abroad, ſo that you found nothing very painful to embitter your return. Many go abroad well, but return no more. The affectionate wife, the prattling children, liſten for the well-known ſound of papa's foot at the door; but they liſten in vain: a fall or a fever has intercepted him, and he is gone far, far away. Some leave all well when they go from home; but how changed, how trying the ſcene when they come back! In their abſence the Lord has taken away the deſire of their eyes with a ſtroke; or perhaps ruffians have plundered and murdered their family in the dead of the night, or the fire devoured their habitation.

Ah! how large and various is the liſt of evils and calamities with which ſin has filled the world! You and I and ours eſcape them: we ſtand, though in a field of battle, where thouſands fall around us, becauſe the Lord is pleaſed to keep us. May he have the praiſe, and may we only live to love and ſerve him.

Mrs —— has been very ill, and my heart often much pained while you have been abſent.

But

But the Lord has removed his hand: ſhe is much better, and I hope ſhe will be ſeen in his houſe to-morrow. I have few trials in my own perſon; but when the Lord afflicts her, I feel it. It is a mercy that he has made us *one*; but it expoſes us to many a pain, which we might have miſſed if we cared but little for each other. Alas! there is uſually an ounce of the golden calf, of idolatry and dependence, in all the warm regard we bear to creatures. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ!* for this reaſon, our ſharpeſt trials uſually ſpring from our moſt valued comforts.

I cannot come to you, therefore you muſt come hither ſpeedily. Be ſure to bring Mr B—— with you. I ſhall be very glad to ſee him, and I long to thank him for clothing my book. It looks well on the outſide, and I hope to find it ſound and ſavoury. I love the author, and that is a ſtep towards liking the book. For where we love, we are generally tender, and favourably take every thing by the beſt handle, and are vaſtly full of candour: but if we are prejudiced againſt the man, the poor book is half condemned before we open it. It had need be written well, for it will be read with a ſuſpicious eye, as if we wiſhed to find treaſon in every page. I am glad I diverted and profited you by calling you a ſpeckled bird. I can tell you ſuch a bird in this day, that wears the full colour of no ſect or party, is *rara avis*; if not quite ſo ſcarce as the phœnix, yet to be met with but here and there. It is impoſſible I ſhould be all of a colour, when I have been a debtor to all ſorts; and like the jay in the fable, have been beholden to moſt of the birds in the air for a feather or two. Church and meeting, Methodiſt and Moravian, may all perceive ſomething in my coat taken from them. None of them are angry with me for borrowing from *them*; but then why could I not be content with *their* co-

lour, without going amongſt other flocks and coveys, to make myſelf ſuch a motley figure? Let them be angry; if I have culled the beſt feathers from all, then ſurely I am finer than any.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir, *Auguſt* 1778.

IF the Lord affords health; if the weather be tolerable; if no unforeſeen change takes place; if no company comes in upon me to-night, (which ſometimes unexpectedly happens); with theſe proviſos, Mr S—— and I have engaged to travel to —— on Monday next, and hope to be with you by or before eleven o'clock.

In ſuch a precarious world, it is needful to form our plans at two days diſtance, with precaution and exceptions, James, iv. 13. However, if it be the Lord's will to bring us together, and if the purpoſed interview be for his glory and our good, then I am ſure nothing ſhall prevent it. And who in his right wits would wiſh either to viſit or be viſited upon any other terms? O if we could but be pleaſed with *his* will, we might be pleaſed from morning to night, and every day in the year.

Pray for a bleſſing upon our coming together. It would be a pity to walk ten miles to pick ſtraws, or to come with our empty veſſels upon our heads, ſaying, We have found no water.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VII.

My dear Friend, *Oct.* 1778.

YOur letters are always welcome; the laſt doubly ſo for being unexpected. If you never heard before of a line of yours being uſeful, I will tell you for once, that I get ſome pleaſure and inſtruction whenever you write to me. And I ſee not but your call to letter-writing is as clear as mine, at leaſt when you are able to put pen to paper.

I muſt ſay ſomething to your queries about 2 Sam. xiv. I do not approve of the ſcholaſtic diſtinctions about inſpiration, which ſeem to have a tendency to explain away the authority and certainty of one half of the Bible at leaſt. Though the penmen of ſcripture were ever ſo well informed of ſome facts, they would, as you obſerve, need expreſs, full, and infallible inſpiration, to teach them which the Lord would have ſelected and recorded for the uſe of the church, amongſt many others, which to themſelves might appear equally important.

However, with reſpect to hiſtorical paſſages, I dare not pronounce poſitively that any of them are, even in the literal ſenſe, unworthy of the wiſdom of the Holy Ghoſt, and the dignity of inſpiration. Some, yea many of them, have often appeared trivial to me; but I check the thought, and charge it to my own ignorance and temerity. It muſt have ſome importance, becauſe I read it in God's book. On the other hand, though I will not deny that they may all have a ſpiritual and myſtical ſenſe, (for I am no more qualified to judge of the deep things of the Spirit, than to tell you what is paſſing

this morning at the bottom of the ſea); yet if, with my preſent modicum of light, I ſhould undertake to expound many paſſages in a myſtical ſenſe, I fear ſuch a judge as you would think my interpretations fanciful, and not well ſupported. I ſuppoſe I ſhould have thought the Bible complete, though it had not informed me of the death of Rebekah's nurſe, or where ſhe was buried. But ſome tell me that Deborah is the law, and that by the oak I am to underſtand the croſs of Chriſt: and I remember to have heard of a preacher who diſcovered a type of Chriſt crucified in Abſalom hanging by the hair on another oak. I am quite a mole when compared with theſe eagle-eyed divines; and muſt often content myſelf with plodding upon the lower ground of *accommodation* and *alluſion*, except when the New Teſtament writers aſſure me what the mind of the Holy Ghoſt was. I can find the goſpel with more confidence in the hiſtory of Sarah and Hagar than in that of Leah and Rachel; though without Paul's help I ſhould have conſidered them both as family ſquabbles, recorded chiefly to illuſtrate the general truth, that vanity and vexation of ſpirit are incident to the beſt men, in the moſt favoured ſituations. And I think there is no part of Old Teſtament hiſtory from which I could not (the Lord helping me) draw obſervations, that might be ſuitable to the pulpit, and profitable to his people: ſo I might perhaps from Livy or Tacitus. But then with the Bible in my hands I go upon ſure grounds: I am certain of the facts I ſpeak from, that they really did happen. I may likewiſe depend upon the ſprings and motives of actions, and not amuſe myſelf and my hearers with ſpeeches which were never ſpoken, and motives which were never thought of, till the hiſtorian rummaged his pericranium for ſomething to embelliſh his work. I doubt not but were you to conſider Joab's courtly conduct only in

in a literal ſenſe, how it tallied with David's deſire, and how gravely and graciouſly he granted himſelf a favour, while he profeſſed to oblige Joab: I ſay, in this view you would be able to illuſtrate many important ſcriptural doctrines, and to ſhew that the *paſſage* is important to thoſe who are engaged in ſtudying the anatomy of the human heart.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

My dear Friend, *Oct.* 27. 1778.

I Have been witneſs to a great and important revolution this morning, which took place while the greateſt part of the world was aſleep. Like many ſtate revolutions, its firſt beginnings were almoſt undiſcernible; but the progreſs, though gradual, was ſteady, and the event deciſive. A while ago darkneſs reigned. Had a man then dropped for the firſt time into our world, he might have thought himſelf baniſhed into a hopeleſs dungeon. How could he expect light to riſe out of ſuch a ſtate? And when he ſaw the firſt glimmering of dawn in the eaſt, how could he promiſe himſelf that it was the forerunner of ſuch a glorious ſun as has ſince riſen! With what wonder would ſuch a new comer obſerve the bounds of his view enlarging, and the diſtinctneſs of objects increaſing from one minute to another; and how well content would he be to part with the twinklings of the ſtars, when he had the broad day all around him in exchange? I cannot ſay this revolution is extraordinary, becauſe it happens every morning; but

ſurely it is aſtoniſhing, or rather it would be ſo, if man was not aſtoniſhingly ſtupid.

Such ſtrangers once were we. Darkneſs, groſs darkneſs, covered us. How confined were our views? And even the things which were within our reach we could not diſtinguiſh. Little did we then think what a glorious day we were appointed to ſee; what an unbounded proſpect would ere long open before us. We knew not that there was a ſun of righteouſneſs, and that he would dawn, and riſe, and ſhine upon our hearts. And as the idea of what we ſee now was then hidden from us, ſo at preſent we are almoſt equally at a loſs how to form any conception of the ſtronger light and brighter proſpects which we wait and hope for. Comparatively we are in the dark ſtill; at the moſt we have but a dim twilight, and ſee nothing clearly; but it is the dawn of immortality, and a ſure preſage and earneſt of glory.

Thus, at times, it ſeems a darkneſs that may be felt broods over your natural ſpirits: but when the day-ſtar riſes upon your heart, you ſee and rejoice in his light. You have days as well as nights; and after a few more viciſſitudes, you will take your flight to the regions of everlaſting light, where your ſun will go down no more. Happy you, and happy I, if I ſhall meet you there, as I truſt I ſhall. How ſhall we love and ſing, and wonder, and praiſe the Saviour's name!

Laſt Sunday a young man died here of extreme old age at twenty-five. He laboured hard to ruin a good conſtitution, and unhappily ſucceeded; yet amuſed himſelf with the hopes of recovery almoſt to the laſt. We have a ſad knot of ſuch poor creatures in this place, who labour to ſtifle each other's convictions, and to ruin themſelves and aſſociates, ſoul and body. How induſtriouſly is Satan ſerved!

ſerved! I was formerly one of his moſt active under-tempters. Not content with running the broad way myſelf, I was indefatigable in enticing others; and had my influence been equal to my wiſhes, I would have carried all the human race with me. And doubtleſs ſome have periſhed, to whoſe deſtruction I was greatly inſtrumental, by tempting them to ſin, and by poiſoning and hardening them with principles of infidelity; and yet I was ſpared. When I think of the moſt with whom I ſpent my unhappy days of ignorance, I am ready to ſay, I only am eſcaped alive to tell thee. Surely I have not half the activity and zeal in the ſervice of him who ſnatched me as a brand out of the burning, as I had in the ſervice of his enemy. Then the whole ſtream of my endeavours and affections went one way; now my beſt deſires are continually croſſed, counteracted, and ſpoiled, by the ſin which dwelleth in me; then the tide of a corrupt nature bore me along; now I have to ſtrive and ſwim againſt it. The Lord cut me ſhort of opportunities, and placed me where I could do but little miſchief; but had my abilities and occaſions been equal to my heart, I ſhould have been a Voltaire and a Tiberius in one character, a monſter of profaneneſs and licentiouſneſs. O to grace how great a debtor! A common drunkard or profligate is a petty ſinner to what I was. I had the ambition of a Cæſar or an Alexander, and wanted to rank in wickedneſs among the foremoſt of the human race. When you have read this, praiſe the Lord for his mercy to the chief of ſinners, and pray that I may have grace to be faithful. But I have rambled. I meant to tell you, that on Sunday afternoon I preached from *Why will ye die?* Ezek. xxxiii. 10. 11. I endeavoured to ſhew poor ſinners, that if they died it was becauſe they *would*, and if they *would* they *muſt*. I was much affected for a time: I could hardly

hardly ſpeak for weeping, and ſome wept with me. From ſome, alas! I can no more draw a tear, or a relenting thought, than from a mill-ſtone.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

My dear Friend, *Nov.* 27. 1778.

YOU are a better expoſitor of ſcripture than of my ſpeeches, if you really inferred from my laſt that I think you ſhall die ſoon. I cannot ſay poſitively you will not die ſoon, becauſe life at all times is uncertain; however, according to the doctrine of probabilities, I think, and always thought, you bid fair enough to outlive me. The gloomy tinge of your weak ſpirits led you to conſider yourſelf much worſe in point of health than you appear to me to be.

In the other point I dare be more poſitive, that die when you will, you will die in the Lord. Of this I have not the leaſt doubt; and I believe you doubt of it leſs, if poſſible, than I, except in thoſe darker moments when the atrabilious humour prevails.

I heartily ſympathize with you in your complaints; but I ſee you in ſafe hands. The Lord loves you, and will take care of you. He who raiſes the dead can revive your ſpirits when you are caſt down. He who ſets bounds to the ſea, and ſays, "Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further," can limit and moderate that gloom which ſometimes diſtreſſes you. He knows why he permits you to be thus exerciſed. I cannot aſſign the reaſons, but I am ſure they are worthy of his wiſdom and love;

and

and that you will hereafter ſee, and ſay, He has done all things well. If I was as wiſe as your philoſopher, I might ſay a great deal about a melancholy complexion; but I love not to puzzle myſelf with ſecond cauſes, while the firſt cauſe is at hand, which ſufficiently accounts for every phœnomenon in a believer's experience. Your conſtitution, your ſituation, your temper, your diſtemper, all that is either comfortable or painful in your lot, is of his appointment. The hairs of your head are all numbered: the ſame power which produced the planet Jupiter is neceſſary to the production of a ſingle hair, nor can one of them fall to the ground without his notice, any more than the ſtars can fall from their orbits. In providence no leſs than in creation he is *Maximus in minimis*. Therefore fear not; only believe. Our ſea may ſometimes be ſtormy, but we have an infallible pilot, and ſhall infallibly gain our port.

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

My dear Friend, *Feb.* 23. 1779.

ON Saturday, and not before, I heard you had been ill. Had the news reached me ſooner, I ſhould have ſent you a line ſooner. I hope you will be able to inform me that you are now better, and that the Lord continues to do you good by every diſpenſation he allots you. Healing and wounding are equally from his hand, and equally tokens of his love and care over us. I have but little affliction in my own perſon, but I have been often chaſtened of late by proxy. The Lord, for his

his people's ſake, is ſtill pleaſed to give me health and ſtrength for public ſervice; but when I need the rod he lays it upon Mrs ——. In this way I have felt much, without being diſabled or laid aſide. But he has heard prayer for her likewiſe, and for more than a fortnight paſt ſhe has been comfortably well. I lay at leaſt one half of her ſickneſs to my own account. She ſuffers for me, and I through her. It is indeed touching me in a tender part. Perharps if *I* could be more wiſe, watchful, and humble, it might contribute more to the re-eſtabliſhment of her health than all the medicines ſhe takes.

I ſomehow neglected to confer with you about the buſineſs of the Faſt-day. The laſt of my three ſermons, when I had, as I expected, the largeſt congregation, was a ſort of hiſtorical diſcourſe, from Deut. xxxii. 15.: In which, running over the leading national events from the time of Wickliff, I endeavoured to trace the ſteps and turns by which the Lord has made us a fat and thriving people, and in the event bleſſed us beyond his favoured Jeſhurun of old, with civil and religious liberty, peace, honour, and proſperity, and goſpel-privileges. How fat we were when the war terminated in the year 1763, and how we have kicked, and forſaken the rock of our ſalvation of late years! Then followed a ſketch of our preſent ſtate and ſpirit as a people, both in a religious and political view. I ſtarted at the picture while I drew it, though it was a very inadequate repreſentation. We ſeemed willing to afflict our ſouls for one day, as Dr Lowth reads Iſa. lviii. 5. But the next day things returned into their former channel: the faſt and the occaſion ſeemed preſently forgotten, except by a few ſimple ſouls, who are deſpiſed and hated by the reſt for their preciſeneſs, becauſe they think ſin ought to be lamented every day in the year.

Who

Who would envy Caſſandra her gift of prophecy upon the terms ſhe had it, that her declarations, however true, ſhould meet with no belief or regard? It is the lot of goſpel-miniſters, with reſpect to the bulk of their hearers. But bleſſed be the grace which makes a few exceptions! Here and there one will hear, believe, and be ſaved. Every one of theſe is worth a world; and our ſucceſs with a few ſhould conſole us for all our trials.

Come and ſee us as ſoon as you can, only not to-morrow, for I am then to go to T——. My Lord, the Great Shepherd, has one ſheep there, related to the fold under my care. I can ſeldom ſee her, and ſhe is very ill. I expect ſhe will be ſoon removed to the paſture above. Our love to Mrs B——.

Believe me yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

My dear Friend, *April* 23. 1779.

MAY I not ſtyle myſelf a friend, when I remember you after an interval of ſeveral weeks ſince I ſaw you, and through a diſtance of threeſcore miles? But the truth is, you have been neither abſent nor diſtant from my heart a day, Your idea has travelled with me: you are a kind of familiar, very often before the eye of my mind. This I hope may be admitted as a proof of friendſhip.

I know the Lord loves you, and you know it likewiſe: every affliction affords you a freſh proof of it. How wiſe his management in our trials! How wiſely adjuſted in ſeaſon, weight, continuance,

ance, to anſwer his gracious purpoſes in ſending them! How unſpeakably better to be at his diſpoſal than at our own! So you ſay; ſo you think; ſo you find. You truſt in him, and ſhall not be diſappointed. Help me with your prayers, that I may truſt him too, and be at length enabled to ſay without reſerve, What thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt. I had rather ſpeak theſe three ſentences from my heart, in my mother tongue, than be maſter of all the languages in Europe.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

My dear Friend, *Auguſt* 19. 1779.

AMong the reſt of temporal mercies I would be thankful for pen, ink, and paper, and the convenience of the poſt, by which means we can waft a thought to a friend when we cannot get at him. My will has been good to ſee you; but you muſt accept the will for the deed. The Lord has not permitted me.

I have been troubled of late with the rheumatiſm in my left arm. Mine is a ſinful, vile body, and it is a mercy that any part of it is free from pain. It is virtually the ſeat and ſubject of all diſeaſes; but the Lord holds them like wild beaſts in a chain under a ſtrong reſtraint; was that reſtraint taken off, they would ruſh upon their prey from every quarter, and ſeize upon every limb, member, joint, and nerve, at once. Yet, though I am a ſinner, and though my whole texture is ſo frail and expoſed, I have enjoyed for a number of years an almoſt perfect exemption both from pain and ſickneſs.

neſs. This is wonderful indeed, even in my own eyes.

But my ſoul is far from being in a healthy ſtate. There I have laboured, and ſtill labour under a complication of diſeaſes; and, but for the care and ſkill of an infallible phyſician, I muſt have died the death long ago. At this very moment my ſoul is feveriſh, dropſical, paralytic. I feel a loſs of appetite, a diſinclination both to food and to medicine; ſo that I am alive by miracle: yet I truſt I ſhall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. When I faint, he revives me again. I am ſure he is able, and I truſt he has promiſed to heal me; but how inveterate muſt my diſeaſe be, that is not yet ſubdued, even under his management!

Well, my friend, there is a land where the inhabitant ſhall no more ſay I am ſick. Then my eyes will not be dim, nor my ear heavy, nor my heart hard.

One ſight of Jeſus as he is,
Will ſtrike all ſin for ever dead.

Bleſſed be his name for this glorious hope! May it chear us under all our preſent uneaſy feelings, and reconcile us to every croſs. The way muſt be right, however rough, that leads to ſuch a glorious end.

O for more of that gracious influence, which in a moment can make the wilderneſs ſoul rejoice and bloſſom like the roſe! I want ſomething which neither critics nor commentators can help me to. The ſcripture itſelf, whether I read it in Hebrew, Greek, French, or Engliſh, is a ſealed book in all languages, unleſs the Spirit of the Lord is preſent to expound and apply. Pray for me. No prayer ſeems more ſuitable to me than that of the Pſalmiſt,

" Bring

"Bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may praiſe thy "name."

I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

My dear Friend, *Auguſt* 28. 1779.

I Want to hear how you are. I hope your complaint is not worſe than when I ſaw you. I hope you are eaſier, and will ſoon find yourſelf able to move about again. I ſhould be ſorry, if to the ſymptoms of the ſtone you ſhould have the gout ſuperadded in your right hand; for then you will not be able to write to me.

We go on much as uſual; ſometimes very poorly, ſometimes a little better; the latter is the caſe today. My rheumatiſm continues; but it is very moderate and tolerable. The Lord deals gently with us, and gives us many proofs that he does not afflict willingly.

The days ſpeed away apace; each one bears away its own burden with it, to return no more. Both pleaſures and pains that are paſt are gone for ever. What is yet future will likewiſe be ſoon paſt. The *end* is coming. O to realize the thought, and to judge of things now in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the judgement we ſhall form of them, when we are about to leave them all! Many things which now either elate or depreſs us, will then appear to be trifles light as air.

One thing is needful: to have our hearts united to the Lord in humble faith; to ſet him always before us; to rejoice in him as our Shepherd and our portion; to ſubmit to all his appointments, not of neceſſity,

neceſſity, becauſe he is ſtronger than we, but with a chearful acquieſcence, becauſe he is wiſe and good, and loves us better than we do ourſelves; to feed upon his truth; to have our underſtandings, wills, affections, imaginations, memory, all filled and impreſſed with the great myſteries of redeeming love, to do all for him, to receive all from him, to find all in him. I have mentioned many things, but they are all compriſed in one, a life of faith in the Son of God. We are empty veſſels in ourſelves, but we cannot remain empty. Except Jeſus dwells in our hearts, and fills them with his power and preſence, they will be filled with folly, vanity, and vexation.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIV.

My dear Friend, *Oct.* 26. 1779.

BEing to go out of town to-day, I ſtarted up before light to write to you, and hoped to have ſent you a long letter; when, behold! I could not get at any paper. I am now waiting for a peep at Mr B—— at his lodgings, who came to town laſt night; and I ſhall write as faſt as I can till I ſee him.

I feel for you a little in the ſame way as you feel for yourſelf. I bear a friendly ſympathy in your late ſharp and ſudden trial. I mourn with that part of you which mourns; but at the ſame time I rejoice in the proof you have, and which you give, that the Lord is with you of a truth. I rejoice on your account, to ſee you ſupported and comforted, and enabled to ſay, He has done all things well. I rejoice on my own account. Such inſtances of his faithfulneſs,

faithfulneſs and all-ſufficiency are very encouraging. We muſt all expect hours of trouble in our turn. We muſt all feel in our concernments the vanity and uncertainty of creature-comforts. What a mercy is it to know from our own paſt experience, and to have it confirmed to us by the experience of others, that the Lord is good, a ſtrong-hold in the day of trouble, and that he knoweth them that truſt in him. Creatures are like candles, they waſte while they afford us a little light, and we ſee them extinguiſhed in their ſockets one after another. But the light of the ſun makes amends for them all. The Lord is ſo rich that he eaſily can, ſo good that he certainly will, give his children more than he ever will take away. When his gracious voice reaches the heart, It is I, be not afraid; Be ſtill, and know that I am God; when he gives us an impreſſion of his wiſdom, power, love, and care; then the ſtorm which attempts to riſe in our natural paſſions is huſhed into a calm; the fleſh continues to feel, but the ſpirit is made willing. And ſomething more than ſubmiſſion takes place; a ſweet reſignation and acquieſcence, and even a joy that we have any thing which we value to ſurrender to his call.

Yours, &c.

21 JY 64

I N-

INDEX

TO

CARDIPHONIA.

A

ABRAHAM, in what ſenſe God tempted him, i. 96.
ABDIEL, Milton's character of, i. 72.
Actions, no real goodneſs in the moſt ſpecious, unleſs performed with a reference to the glory of God, i. 41.
Acts, xxi. 20. 21. comment on, ii. 68.
ADAM, in what ſenſe he died, the moment he eat the forbidden fruit, i. 146. not deprived of rationality by ſin, but of ſpirituality, 147.
ADDISON, Mr, ſuppoſeth imagination alone capable of making us inconceivably happy or miſerable, i. 88.
Adiaphora, a nice diſquiſition concerning the nature and limits of the, unneceſſary, i. 115.
Afflictions, appointed by God to prove, manifeſt, and purify the graces of his children, i. 96. advantages of afflictions, ii. 23. 24. 220. 245. our duty under them, 25.
Alchymy, the true, i. 41.
AMERICA, reflections on the unhappy diſputes between Great Britain and, i. 76.
Amuſements, polite, danger of, i. 120. ii. 149.
Anatomy, ſpiritual, the ſtudy of the human heart, i. 51.
Anger, unbecoming in the followers of Jeſus, ii. 1.
Angels, in what ſenſe we ſhould endeavour to be like them now, i. 83. the light in which they would conſider all terreſtrial things, if reſident here, 84.

admire the myſteries of redemption, 85. are not ſo indebted to the grace of God as the Believer, 86. difference between their holineſs and that of ſinners, ii. 43.

Apoſtacy, final, every ſin has a tendency towards it, i. 6. the root of all apoſtacy is a proud diſpoſition to queſtion the propriety of divine appointments, ii. 56.

Apoſtles, their exhortation, i. 11.

Arithmetic, ſcriptural, what it teaches, i. 77.

Arminian, the term very indiſcriminate, i. 142.

Articles of faith, propriety of ſubſcription to ſome, i. 128.

Aſſurance of his acceptance in the beloved attainable by the believer in this life, i. 91. if we grieve the Spirit, our evidences of acceptance decline of courſe, 93. ſweet expreſſions of aſſurance from a perſon dangerouſly ill, ii. 197. aſſurance grows by repeated conflict, 200.

Athanaſian Creed, damnatory clauſes of the, juſtified, i. 127.

AUGUSTUS, the beautiful lines of Horace to, impious and idolatrous; but perfectly becoming the mouth of a Chriſtian, addreſſing himſelf to God, i. 43. 46.

B

Backwardneſs to prayer and reading the ſcriptures, exhortation againſt, ii. 61.

BAXTER, Mr, character of, i. 244.

BEDE, *Venerable*, his ſingular exception to the good character of a cotemporary, ii. 266.

Believer, deſcription of a, i. 8. his inconſiſtency accounted for, 10. his inability to do what he would 16. beneficial effects to be derived from this conſideration, 18. ſhall finally triumph over his conflicts, 24. God's purpoſe in his favour cannot be diſappointed, 24. evidences of the truly humble believer, 26. the advantages he derives from a reliance on the all-ſufficiency of God, 28. and from an acquieſcence in his will, 29. a ſingle eye to the glory of God ſhould be the ultimate ſcope of all his undertakings, 30. the corrupt principle, ſelf, is for a ſeaſon the grand principle of his conduct, 31. the fruits and happineſs

happineſs of his conduct while under the influence of prevailing grace, 31. it is his comfort that he is not under the law, but under grace, 32. the unſhaken ground of his hope, 32. a knowledge of God his only proper ground of glory and joy, 35. how he ſhould walk with God in the daily occurrences of life, 39. his whole buſineſs in this life is, to fill up his connections and ſituations in ſuch a manner, that God may be glorified in him and by him, 40. no ſcriptural evidence that he ſerves God at all, any farther than he finds an habitual deſire to ſerve him wholly, 41. no real goodneſs in his moſt ſpecious actions, unleſs performed with a view to the glory of God, 41. his chief perplexities ariſe from an undue, though unperceived attachment to ſelf, 42. in what ſenſe he is inſpired by the Holy Spirit, 62. his great and honourable privilege, 81. in what ſenſe he ſhould endeavour to be as the angels now, 83. in what his preſent bleſſedneſs conſiſts, 90. a perſuaſion of his acceptance in the Beloved attainable in this life, 91. but he will not think himſelf bleſſed, unleſs he has a conſcience void of offence, 92. real communion with the Lord an important part of his bleſſedneſs, 93. the dignities and perfections of Chriſt adequate to all his wants, 106. it is the perfection of his character and happineſs, that his ſoul is united by love to the chief good, 107. his Lord's example forms him to the habit of diffuſive benevolence, 110. his charity to thoſe who differ from him, 112. canons for his conduct, 115. he will abſtain from ſome things, not becauſe they are unlawful, but inexpedient, 116. the peculiar ſpirit required in him in times of prevailing degeneracy, 119. his warfare, 197. 220. 267. 276. ii. 38, 53. *& paſſim.* compared to a tree, i. 253. ii. 160. the great cauſe of his frequent conflicts, i. 277. his beſt pleaſures deſcribed, 287. God not leſs glorified by his obedience than by that of Gabriel, ii. 43. all things will work together for his good, 167. *& paſſim.* ſome things which abate the comforts of his profeſſion are rather impediments than properly ſinful, 194. marks by which he may judge whether he truly loves the Lord, 200.

ſecret prayer, and the good word, the wells whence he draws the water of ſalvation, 213. the ſuffering believer a ſpectacle to angels, 215. to behold the glory and the love of Jeſus, his only effectual way to participate of his image, 217. his higheſt love for Chriſt infinitely beneath what he owes to him, 252. See *Chriſtian*, and *Saints*.

Bible, the fountain of life, i. 9. a ſealed book, till the heart be awakened, 259. See *Goſpel*, and *Word of God*.

Bleſſedneſs of the Believer, in what it conſiſts, i. 90.

Boaſting, what effectually excludes, i. 25. 82.

Books, a medium in the choice of, ii. 111.

Brazen ſerpent, alluded to, i. 163. 276.

Brethren, care to be taken not to offend our weak, i. 116.

C.

CANDIA, why the Grand Seignor cauſed 100,000 men to periſh in that iſland, i. 123.

CASSANDRA, miniſters of the Goſpel compared to, i. 57. ii. 281.

Caution, too often degenerates into cowardice, ii. 110.

CENNICK, Mr, his ſermons commended, ii. 73.

Charity, towards thoſe who differ from us, the true idea of, i. 112. ii. 5. 71. to our weak brethren what it requires, i. 116. and to the world at large, 117.

CHARLES V. Dr Robertſon's hiſtory of, in what reſpects it may be defective, i. 75.

Children, averſe from good, but propenſe to evil, i. 147. education of, an undoubted duty, but will not change the heart, 180.

CHRIST. See *Jeſus*.

Chriſtian, what frame of mind diſtinguiſhes one from another, i. 26. definition of a Chriſtian, 104. 267. ſketch of his temper, 106. 246. compared to an oak, 260. the exerciſed and experienced Chriſtian acquires a ſkill and compaſſion in dealing with others, ii. 62. a Chriſtian without trials compared to a mill without wind or water, 246. See *Believer*, and *Saints*.

Chriſtianity, the peculiar and inimitable mark of, i. 65.

Communion with God, an important part of the believer's bleſſedneſs, i. 93. affords the beſt relaxation from the cares of life, 119.
Compliments, religious, the moſt unſeemly of any, ii. 42.
Conflicts, great cauſe of the believer's, i. 276.
Conquerors, in what light they may be viewed, i. 123.
Conſcience, canons for the direction of a tender and ſcrupulous, i. 115. difference between the convictions of natural conſcience, and the workings of the Holy Spirit, 162.
Conſideration, the duty of, i. 275.
Conſolation, motives for, on the death of a friend, ii. 33. 223. the conſolations of the goſpel hidden from worldly men, 206. the *proper* tendency of ſenſible conſolations is to humble the believer, 210.
Converſion, ſcriptural account of, i. 139. deſcribed in ſcripture by various names, 142. is not the being proſelyted to an opinion, but the receiving of a principle of *divine* light and life into the ſoul, 143. caſe of converſions occaſioned by dreams, 241. every real converſion miraculous, 294.
Converts, young, characteriſtics of, i. 114.
Convictions, ſpiritual, their effect, i. 162.
Corruption. See *Human Nature*, and *Human Heart*.
Cox, Mr, his Muſeum illuſtrative of the vaſt difference in the Chriſtian life, i. 28. further reflections on, ii. 229.

D

Darkneſs, the powers of, though little is ſaid of them in ſcripture, there is enough to make us tremble to think of them as our enemies, i. 47. can do nothing but with the Divine permiſſion, 47. *& paſſim*.
DAVID never appears in a more lively frame of mind, than when remote from, and longing for, public ordinances, ii. 213.
Day and night, reflections on the ſucceſſion of, ii. 275.
Deafneſs, reflections on having been afflicted with, i. 34.
Death, what reconciles us to the thought of, i. 11. 19. further reflections on, 73. our view of death will not always be the ſame, ii. 44.
Death-bed, pious converſe of a young woman on her, i. 53.

i. 53. various impreſſions from different death-bed ſcenes, 55. 176. ii. 96. 219. 223.
Death-bed repentance, thoughts on a, i. 182.
Deiſt, expoſtulation with a, i. 281.
Deity of Chriſt and of the Holy Spirit in union with the Father, a doctrine neceſſary to be believed in order to ſalvation, i. 127.
DEVONSHIRE, Duke of, his motto becoming every Chriſtian, i. 218.
Deuteronomy, xxxii. 15. comment on, ii. 280.
Diſtraction, various degrees of, i. 101.
Diverſions, public, fatal tendency of, ii. 149.
Doubts and fears, in a greater or leſs degree the common experience of the Lord's people, i. 260.
Dreams, perſons converted by, i. 241.

E

Education, almoſt univerſally ſuited to add to the ſtimulus of depraved nature, i. 89. of children, an undoubted duty, but will not change the heart, 180.
EDWARDS, Mr, his "Diſcourſe on the Freedom of the Will" commended, ii. 69. 114.
Empires, the great maſter-wheel in the revolutions of, i. 75.
Epheſians, iii. 8. remarkable effect of this text on a worthy clergyman, i. 165.
Error, the ſureſt way to prevent or refute, is to preach the truth, ii. 110.
Experience, the Lord's ſchool, i. 26. ii. 112. contributes gradually to ſoften and ſweeten our ſpirits, 1.
Exerciſes, ſpiritual, not a little influenced by our conſtitutional temperament, i. 269. ii. 14. 18. the Lord's view in permitting us to paſs through ſuch a variety of inward and outward exerciſes, 117.
Extempore preaching, requiſites for, ii. 61. the gift of God, 64. reaſons for preferring it, 182.
Ezekiel, xvi. 63. comment on, i. 26.

F

Faith, the life of, an inexplicable myſtery, till experience makes it plain, i. 62. makes the loweſt ſtate of life ſupportable, and a diſmiſſion from the higheſt deſirable,

deſirable, 68. can trace and admire the hand of God, 70. muſt have truth for its object, 127. very different from a mere rational aſſent to the goſpel, 144. not the effect of reaſoning, but a ſpecial gift of God, 152. difference between faith and rational aſſent, 163. 173. faith is always efficacious, 164. the effect of a principle of new life implanted in the ſoul, 164. a renunciation of every thing we are apt to call our own, 177. unites the ſoul to Chriſt, 179. without a principle of ſaving faith, we can perform nothing acceptable to God, ii. 12. the child-like ſimplicity of faith is to follow God without reaſoning, 56.

Family connections, how to be regarded, i. 121.

Fervour, generally declines with an increaſe of knowledge, i. 7.

Friends, ſeparation from, can be made tolerable by grace, ii. 212. encouragement to pray and to hope for unconverted friends, 212. motives for conſolation on the loſs of, 33. 223.

Friendſhip, a little ſuſpicious when exerciſed with long ſilence, i. 154.

Forgiveneſs of each other, neceſſity of, ii. 76.

Form of ſound words, i. 234.

G

GALATIANS, their loſs left upon record as a warning to us, i. 90.

Galatians, v. 17, comment on, i. 15.

Glaſs, exceedingly porous, ii. 39.

GOD, his providential care, i. 18. his ſovereignty, 21. the gracious purpoſes to which he makes the ſenſe of our depravity ſubſervient, 24. the unchangeableneſs of his love, and the riches of his mercy, more illuſtrated by the multiplied pardons he beſtows upon his people, than if they needed no forgiveneſs at all, 24. his purpoſe in favour of the righteous cannot be diſappointed, 25. a broken and contrite ſpirit pleaſing to him, 26. experience his ſchool, 26. advantages of relying on his all-ſufficiency, 29. an acquieſcence in his will one of the greateſt privileges of our profeſſion, 30. a ſingle eye to his glory ſhould be the ultimate hope of all our undertakings, 30. a knowledge of him

the only proper ground of the believer's glory and joy, 25. how to walk with him in the daily occurrences of life, 39. 273. our whole buſineſs in this life is ſo to fill up our connections and ſituations, that he may be glorified in us and by us, 40. no ſcriptural evidence that we ſerve him at all, any farther than as we find an habitual deſire to ſerve him wholly, 41. no real goodneſs in the moſt ſpecious actions, unleſs performed with a reference to his glory, *ib.* nothing worthy to ſtand in competition with his ſervice, *ib.* benefits of acting ſimply for him, 42. his providential care of the univerſe, 46. the powers of darkneſs can do nothing without his permiſſion, 47. his patience wonderful, 48. more wonderful ſtill his adminiſtration in his kingdom of grace, 49. to have a ſenſe of his loving kindneſs the beſt part of life, and better than life itſelf, 75. his glory beſt diſplayed by keeping us poor and empty in ourſelves, 82. real communion with him an important part of the believer's bleſſedneſs, 93. appoints afflictions to prove, manifeſt, and purify the graces of his children, 96. over-rules the councils of princes, 122. diſcuſſion of the queſtion, whether he be the author of ſin, 175. the endearing views in which he is made known to us in the goſpel, 259. was once manifeſted in the fleſh upon earth, and is now manifeſted in the fleſh in heaven, ii. 10. not leſs glorified by the believer's obedience, than by that of Gabriel, 43. is always pleaſed to work by ſuch means as may ſhew that the power is his, 58. nothing trivial that is done for him, 67. his kingdom not in names and ſentiments, 110. a diffidence of his protection unbecoming a believer, i. 295.

Godlineſs, the great myſtery of, i. 66.

Goſpel of Chriſt, a diſpenſation for ſinners, i. 32. ſtriking illuſtration of the reception it meets with from a blinded world, 57. deſigned to give us a certainty of our acceptance and perſeverance, 105. a ſalvation appointed for thoſe that are ready to periſh, 144. 179. the knowledge and comfort of it attained but by few beſides the poor and ſimple, 259. its happy efficacy when clothed with the authority and energy of the Holy Spirit, ii. 18. affords a ſource of purer, ſweeter,

ſweeter, and more ſubſtantial pleaſures, than the vain amuſements of life, 150. See *Bible*, and *Word of God.*

Grace, cauſes of decline in, i. 1. growth of, in what it conſiſts, 6. Jeſus the fountain of, *ib.* the comfort in not being under the law, but under grace, 32. its happy and unſpeakable influence, 56. grace and faith make the loweſt ſtate of life ſupportable, and a diſmiſſion from the higheſt deſirable, 68. grace the great deſirable while here, 75. communion with God in the appointed means of grace an important part of the believer's bleſſedneſs, 93. ſhould be rather termed invincible than irreſiſtible, 169. the work of grace compared to corn and to a building, 207. to an oak, 212. ii. 160. and to the lighting of a fire, 9. it is to be eſtimated, not from imperfect appearances, but from the difficulties it has to overcome, 43. makes all the difference between one Chriſtian and another, 106. *& paſſim.*

GREAT BRITAIN, reflections on the unhappy diſputes between America and, i. 76.

Greenland miſſion, hiſtory of the, commended, ii. 92.

Grief, fatal conſequences of, when indulged and exceſſive, ii. 27. for indwelling ſin, under a wrong direction, when it leads us to impatience or diſtruſt, 193.

GROTIUS, dying confeſſion of, i. 55.

H

HALYBURTON, Mr, his Eſſay concerning faith commended, i. 140. his Inquiry into the nature of regeneration and juſtification, ii. 127.

Happineſs, how much it depends on the imagination, i. 88.

Hearers, ſhould be careful not to be prejudiced againſt a doctrine, merely becauſe it is not well ſupported, ii. 13.

HENRY *the Great*, of France, reflection on his character and death, i. 37. his reflection on his birth, 68.

HEROD AGRIPPA, death of, i. 70.

Heroes, in what light they may be viewed, i. 123.

Holineſs, in ſinners, different from that of angels, ii. 43

and peace the peculiar characteriſtics of the diſciples of Jeſus, 70.

HORACE, his invitation to Mœcenas, i. 43. his beautiful addreſs to Auguſtus impious and idolatrous, but would have an expreſſive propriety in the mouth of a believer, addreſſing himſelf to the Supreme Being, 44. 46.

Human heart, its depravity, i. 15. *& paſſim.* the gracious purpoſes to which the Lord makes our ſenſe of it ſubſervient, 24. an eminent part of his government to reſtrain it, 48. compared to Ezekiel's viſion, 208.

Human nature, corruption of, i. 10. 138. 199. 242. *& paſſim.*

Human events, under the direction of infinite wiſdom, i. 18.

Humiliation, a ſpirit of, the ſtrength and beauty of our profeſſion, i. 26. what promotes it, *ib.* effects of true humiliation, *ib.* cauſes of humiliation on the account of ſin never will be wanting, 28.

Humility, an evidence of the Chriſtian's temper Godward, i. 106. the guard of all other graces, 275. its happy effects, ii. 54. humility and love the higheſt attainments in the ſchool of Chriſt, 68. humility cannot be valued too highly, 176.

I

Jailor, converted by St Paul, his caſe, i. 150.

Jeremiah, ix. 23. 24. comment on, i. 34. his pathetic exclamation, 58.

JERICHO, walls of, thrown down by the trumpets of Joſhua, ii. 58.

JESUS CHRIST, the fountain of grace, i. 6. his righteouſneſs our all in all, 10. his all ſufficiency, 14. 22. 106. 242. 258. ii. 107. *& paſſim.* his love ſhould be our conſtant theme, i. 17. ii. 204. benefits and efficacy of his redemption, i. 23. what it is that endears him ſtill more to the ſoul, 25. the tendency of his conſtraining love, 31. his goſpel a diſpenſation for ſinners, 32. our ignorance of his dignity, and of the unutterable diſtreſs he endured, when his ſoul was made an offering for ſin, 45. ſtriking illuſtration

illuſtration of the reception his goſpel meets with from the world, 57. to know that he loved us, a conſtraining motive to devote ourſelves to him, 59. the ſhepherd of his people, and therefore Jehovah, 65. ii. 201. no man can ſay that he is Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt, i. 66. life, talents, influence, and opportunities, how valuable, if we are enabled to improve them for him, 69. a lively thought of our obligations to his redeeming love may reconcile us to a longer continuance here, 75. the neceſſity of our entire dependence on him, 78. his experimental ſympathy with his people, 84. his love the joy of the believer's heart, and the ſpring of his obedience, 107. his example forms the believer to the habit of diffuſive benevolence, 110. a belief in the doctrine of his deity neceſſary to ſalvation, 128. ſcriptural images of Jeſus, 165. the neceſſity of his continual preſence, 206. his work of grace compared to corn and to a building, 207. to an oak, 212. ii. 160. and to lighting of a fire, 9. his heart unſearchable, i. 209. reaſons in proof of his deity, ii. 6. nothing can obviate the objections that a reaſoning mind may make againſt this doctrine, but a real conviction of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, 10. the efficacy of his atonement and interceſſion inconceivable, without a ſuppoſition of his being almighty, 10. the knowledge of him crucified compared to Ithuriel's ſpear, 12. his compaſſions for his people, 20. love and humility the higheſt attainments in his ſchool, 68. holineſs and peace the peculiar characteriſtics of his diſciples, 70. his queſtion to Peter 71. various endearing lights in which his croſs may be conſidered, 73. 162. his glory ſhines more in redeeming one ſinner, than in preſerving a thouſand angels, 90. the kingdoms of providence and grace under his rule, 99. the great and infallible phyſician, 193. 205. his love towards us directed by infinite wiſdom, 205. his conſolations hidden from worldly men, 206. the only effectual way to participate of his image is to behold his glory and his love, 217. the riches of his grace inexhauſtible, 218. our higheſt love infinitely beneath what we owe to him, 251. the neceſſity of an entire

truſt in him, 252. 259. & *paſſim.* See *Redeemer* and *Saviour.*

Ignorance, in itſelf ſinful, i. 148.

Image of God, totally loſt by ſin, i. 146.

Imagination, capable of making us inconceivably happy or miſerable, i. 88. a cultivated imagination what it commonly means, 89. the imagination, ſtrictly ſpeaking, not a ſpiritual faculty, 100.

Indwelling ſin, an active powerful cauſe, i. 277.

Inoculation, arguments for and againſt, ii. 144.

Inſpiration, the queſtion concerning, ii. 273. black, or the influence of the evil ſpirits, i. 63. 80.

JONES, Mr, his "Catholic doctrine of the Trinity" commended, ii. 11.

ISRAELITES, reflections on God's feeding them with manna, i. 81.

Judgement and Practice, humbling difference between, i. 8. 22.

———, *day of*, all human things ſhould be eſtimated now by the light in which they will then appear, i. 44.

K

Knowledge, acquired and experimental, difference between, i. 8. 22. a knowledge of God the only proper ground of glory and joy, 35. the purſuit of every branch of knowledge ridiculous, that is not connected with the one thing needful, ii. 75. vital, experimental knowledge, can only be received from the Holy Spirit, 112.

L

Learning, in what lights it may be conſidered uſeful or dangerous, i. 203.

LEIGHTON, *Archbiſhop*, Biſhop Burnet's character of, ii. 114.

Life, the only reaſon why it is truly deſirable, i. 40. 75. life, talents, influence, and opportunities, how valuable, if we are enabled to improve all for Chriſt, 69. a life divided between God and the world, in what ſenſe deſirable, 119. no *permanent* ſtate in this life that

that can make our experience ceaſe to be a ſtate of warfare and humiliation, 194.

Life of faith, an inexplicable myſtery, till experience makes it plain, i. 61.

London and country grace, difference between, ii. 208.

Love of God, the beſt caſuiſt, i. 37. 115. ii. 5. love of God and of man, the eſſence of religion, i. 234. effects which ſhould be produced by the love of God manifeſted in Chriſt, ii. 19. obedience the beſt teſt of our love to Chriſt, 200.

Love and Meekneſs, the peculiar and inimitable mark of true Chriſtianity, i. 231.

Love and Humility, the higheſt attainments in the ſchool of Chriſt, ii. 68.

Lowneſs of Spirits, effects of, i. 269.

Lunatics, who glory in their ſtraw or their chains, have as much reaſon on their ſide as any perſons on earth who glory in themſelves, i. 35.

M

Man, majeſtic, though in ruins, i. 146. the natural man incapable of diſcerning the things of God, 162. and, as fallen, incapable of doing the leaſt thing towards his ſalvation, till prevented by the grace of God, 168. his inability to come to God not natural but moral, 169. no moral goodneſs in his virtues, unleſs they are founded in a ſupreme love to God, and are produced by faith in Chriſt, 177.

Manna, reflections on God's feeding the Iſraelites with, i. 81.

Matthew, vi. 13. compared with 1 John, v. 18. vol. i. 97.

Mathematical ſtudies, the tendency they have to fix the mind to the contemplation of cold and unintereſting truths, ii. 178.

Meekneſs and Love, the ſpirit of, the peculiar and inimitable mark of true Chriſtianity, i. 231.

MILTON, his character of Abdiel, i. 72.

Miniſter, remarkable caſe of a, i. 182. directions to one in the choice of a wife, ii. 133.

Miniſters of the Goſpel, their lot with reſpect to the bulk of their auditories, like Caſſandra's, i. 57. the ſalvation

tion of one ſoul ſufficient to overbalance all the labours and reproaches they may endure, 58. their relief lies in the wiſdom and ſovereignty of God, 58. the neceſſity of addreſſing their hearers as criminals condemned already, 155. and of their having a deep ſenſe of the evil of ſin in themſelves, 243. illuſtration of their labours as the inſtruments of God, ii. 58. why they are permitted to be ſorely exerciſed both without and within, 77.

Miniſtry, what evidences a call to the, ii. 49.

Miſery, how much it depends on the imagination, i. 88.

Money, obtained in a fair and honourable way, on many accounts deſirable, ii. 133.

Moraliſt, the fine-ſpun dreſs in which he clothes himſelf of no more avail than the produce of a ſpider, i. 56.

Morning, reflections on the appearance of, ii. 275.

Moſes's rod, an inſtrument of God in the hands of his ſervant, ii. 58.

N

National church, idea of a, i. 129.

——— *debt*, of leſs moment than the debt of a national ſin, ii. 95.

NESTOR, his eloquence compared by Homer to a fall of ſnow, ii. 184.

New birth, diſtant from the higheſt effects of natural principles, ii. 14.

——— *Jeruſalem*, i. 12.

——— *year*, reflections on the, i. 73.

NICOLE, M. his opinion of great men and conquerors, i. 123.

O

Obedience, the beſt teſt of our love to Chriſt, ii. 200.

Obſervation and Experience, contribute gradually to ſoften and ſweeten our ſpirits, ii. 3.

Obſtinacy, in itſelf ſinful, i. 148.

"*One thing needful*," an important aphoriſm of our Lord, i. 55. 57. ii. 89.

Ordinances, Goſpel, precious to a believer, i. 9. cannot be neglected without loſs, 257.

OWEN, Dr, his "Expoſition of the 130th Pſalm" commended, ii. 59. his "Diſcourſe on the Holy Spirit" an epitome of his writings, 113.

P

Patriot, the character of a real one, i. 38.

PAUL, St. no one farther from a legal ſpirit, i. 92. not ſincere before his converſion, 148. his conduct to the Jews who had condemned him unheard, ii. 68.

Peace and Holineſs, the peculiar characteriſtics of the diſciples of Jeſus, ii. 70.

PETER, St. lived to glory in what was once an offence to him, the croſs of Chriſt, i. 133. obſervations on our Lord's queſtion to him, ii. 71.

Perfection, ſinleſs, doctrine of, an unſcriptural ſentiment, i. 28. why it ſhould be rejected, ii. 193.

Petersburg, account of an ice palace at, i. 73.

Play-houſes, ſinfulneſs of attending them, ii. 149.

Pleaſures, vanity of, i. 204. Worldly and ſpiritual pleaſures compared, 286.

POMPEY, ſtory of, ii. 257.

POPE, Mr, explanation of an admired line of, i. 104.

Powers of the Imagination and of the Underſtanding, difference between the, i. 13.

Practice and Judgement, humbling difference between, i. 8.

Prayer, the breath of the believer, i. 9. the benefits, 16. 92. and neceſſity of, 275. ii. 61. Frequent ſecret prayer the life of all we do, 83. a bleſſed privilege, 206. Secret prayer and the good word the chief wells whence we draw the water of ſalvation, 213.

Prayer meetings, their happy tendency, ii. 83.

Preaching, extempore, requiſites for, ii. 61. a gift from God, 64. Reaſons for preferring it, 182. Preaching, itinerant, objections to, ii. 186. 188. Preaching loudly, and preaching with power, not ſynonymous expreſſions, 184.

Predeſtination, doctrine of, expreſsly taught in the Scriptures, i. 160.

Preferment, not neceſſary to our peace or uſefulneſs, i. 130.

130. Church-preferment dreadful, in any other view than that of being useful to souls, 221.
Pride, the root of, lies deep in our fallen nature, ii. 167.
Princes, their counsels over-ruled by God, i. 122.
Prosperity, earthly, a reward suited to the desires of men who place their happiness in worldly things, i. 36. a state of temptation, 96.
Providence, divine, a line of Horace, addressed to Augustus, beautifully descriptive of, i. 46. some dispensations of, compared to the capital works of a watch, 189. a diffidence of, unbecoming, i. 295.
Prudence, a word much abused, i. 251. A remarkable deficiency of Christian prudence highly inconvenient, ii. 110.
Psalm xxiii. comment on, i. 64.
—— lxii. 5. —— ii. 210.
—— cxlii. 3. —— ii. 214.

R

Rank, elevated, abstracted from the opportunity it affords of greater usefulness, a more proper subject of condolence, i. 44.
Reason, of itself, incapable of assenting to the truths of revelation, i. 163. When the heart is changed, then reason is sanctified, 164.
Recollection, duty of, i. 275.
Redeemer, the necessity of his being almighty, ii. 10. See *Jesus* and *Saviour*.
Religion, not a science of the head, i. 134.
Repentance, atoning for disobedience by, impropriety of that expression, i. 154. 159. on a death-bed, thoughts on, 182. unto salvation, what is, 184.
Resignation, Christian, very different from a stoical stubbornness, ii. 25. remarkable instance of, 34.
Revelations, xxi. 10. *ad finem*, comment on, i. 12.
Reverend, remark on that epithet, ii. 263.
Righteous, (The) in what sense they are said to be scarcely saved, i. 25.
Righteousness of Christ, our all in all, i. 10. See *Jesus* and *Saviour*.

ROBERTSON, Dr, in what reſpects his Hiſtory of Charles V. may be defective, i. 75. upon what paſſages of ſcripture it may be conſidered as a comment, 122.
Romans, vii. 19 comment on, i. 19. 178.
——— viii. 31—27. comment on, i. 92.
——— xiv. 23. comment on, ii. 12.

S

Saints, their miſcarriages are as land-marks ſet up to warn us, i. 275. a ſweet, though myſterious communion of ſaints, ii. 40. their death precious in the ſight of the Lord, 223.
Salvation, wholly of grace, i. 10.
SARAH *and* HAGAR, the hiſtory of, a deſigned allegory, ii. 13.
Satan, his warfare with us, i. 10. has overturned many a fair profeſſor, 24. yet finds there are ſome againſt whom he cannot prevail, *ib.* always near when the heart is diſpoſed to receive him, 63. his temptation of men illuſtrated, 97. the variety of his devices and efforts, 218. 261. 265.
Saviour, a two-fold neceſſity for one, i. 147. See *Jeſus*, and *Redeemer*.
Scorn, unbecoming in the followers of Jeſus, ii. 3.
Scripture, its excellency, i. 16. how to be read, 93. the truths of, not like mathematical theorems, 133. the duty of attending to the ſcripture, 275. ii. 61. the whole of it the proper ſubject of the goſpel miniſtry, 5. ſcripture and the Spirit of God the beſt expoſitors of ſcripture, 73. how the application of texts of ſcripture ſhould be regulated, when they ſeem to countenance any part of our deſigns or conduct, 131.
Self, the corrupt principle which, for a ſeaſon, is the grand principle of our conduct, i. 31. unleſs corrected and mortified by grace, will find ſomething whereof to glory in the meaneſt characters, 35. moſt of the believer's perplexities ariſe from an undue, though unperceived attachment to it, 42. ſelf the governing principle of great men and conquerors, 123. the univerſal idol, 124.
Self-righteouſneſs. See *Moraliſt*.

Senſibility,

Senſibility, valuable when rightly exerciſed, ii. 17. 25.
Sermons, impropriety of too long, ii. 184.
Siloam, pool of, efficacious only as a means appointed by God, ii. 58.
SIMON MAGUS, exhorted by Peter to repentance and prayer, ii. 58.
Sincerity, no plea of, will exempt from the danger of being under the influence of ignorance and obſtinacy, i. 148. not converſion, tho' a forerunner of it, 149.
Singularity, neceſſity of a certain kind of, i. 117.
Sin, did not deprive Adam of rationality, but of ſpirituality, i. 147. the queſtion whether God be the author of ſin, 175. ſin the ſickneſs of the ſoul, ii. 193. 205.
Sinners, the goſpel a diſpenſation for, i. 32. the converſion of a hundred of more real importance than the *temporal* proſperity of the greateſt nation on earth, 77. cauſes of their unwillingneſs to be converted, 170. difference between their holineſs and that of angels, ii. 43. the glory of Chriſt diſplayed more in the redemption of one ſinner, than in the preſervation of a thouſand angels, 90.
Socinians, &c. employ their critical ſophiſtry againſt thoſe texts which declare the Redeemer's character, i. 65. would readily ſubſcribe a ſcriptural declaration of the high prieſthood, atonement, and interceſſion of Chriſt, if allowed to put their own ſenſe upon the terms, 129. a dangerous error, 137.
SOLOMON's *Song*, deſcribes the experience of the church, i. 252.
Souls, their ineſtimable value, i. 77.
SPIRIT of GOD, a ſimple dependence upon his teaching and influence, ſo as not to ſuperſede the uſe of appointed means, would make every part of duty eaſy and ſucceſsful, i. 39. his influence upon the hearts of all the children of God, 62. 79. belief in his deity eſſential to ſalvation, 128. reveals no new truths, but only ſhews the meaning of his own written word, 157. the ſure and only guide into all truth, 234. vital, experimental knowledge can only be received from him, ii. 112.
Spirit, a broken and contrite one pleaſing to God, i. 26.

Submiſſion

Submiſſion to God, a manifeſtation of the believer's love, i. 108.

Sufferings, why our own are more ſupportable than thoſe of the perſons we love, ii. 19.

SULLY, Duke of, his character, i. 35. reflections on his hiſtory, 36.

Supra-lapſarian and Sub-lapſarian ſcheme, difference between, ii. 127.

T

Talents, how valuable, if we are enabled to improve them for Chriſt, i. 69.

Taſte, definition of, i. 89. the refined taſte of many, an inſuperable bar to their profiting by the preaching of the goſpel, *ib.* a ſpiritual taſte defined, 94.

Temptation, meaning of the word, i. 96. our greateſt temptations uſually found in lawful things, 100. 109. temptations compared to the wind, 265. variety of Satan's temptations, 218. 261. 265.

Things lawful, our greateſt temptations uſually found in, i. 100. 109. why we ought to abſtain from many, 116. what things are neceſſary to be believed, 234.

Thoughts, evil, may intrude into the mind without guilt, if not indulged, i. 263.

Time, value of, i. 118.

Trials, the greatneſs of, to be eſtimated rather by the impreſſion they make upon us, than by their outward appearance, i. 191. the neceſſity that our ſharpeſt trials ſhould ſometimes ſpring from our deareſt comforts, 223.

Trinity, doctrine of, neceſſary to be believed in order to ſalvation, i. 127. not a propoſition, but a principle, 139. ſcriptural arguments for it, ii. 6. 11. the experience of its effects the beſt proof of its truth, 12.

Truth, muſt be the object of faith, i. 127. no doctrinal truth of any value, further than as it has a tendency to promote practical holineſs, 233.

V

VENICE, marriage ceremony between the republic of, and the Adriatic ſea, ii. 130.

Virtue,

Virtue, Chriſtian, is grace, the effect of a new nature, i. 177.
Unbelief, though it ſteals upon us under a ſemblance of humility, is the very eſſence of pride, ii. 199.
Unbelievers. See *Worldly men*.
VOLTAIRE, profanely ſcoffs at the ſentiment of doing all to the glory of God, i. 41. the amanuenſis of Satan, 62. he, and ſuch deceivers of men, had better have been born idiots or lunatics, than have been diſtinguiſhed as the willing inſtruments of the powers of darkneſs, 63. 80. a monſter of profaneneſs, ii. 277.

W

Walking cloſely with God, directions for, i. 274.
Watchfulneſs, neceſſity of, i. 103.
Wife, directions to a miniſter for the choice of a, ii. 133.
Wiſdom, heavenly, in what it conſiſts, i. 251.
Word of God, the believer's food, i. 9. directs and animates to a growth in grace, 11. compared to a mirror, 133. a hiſtory in miniature of the heart of man, the devices of Satan, the ſtate of the world, and the methods of grace, ii. 112. the well of ſalvation, 213.
World, God's principal end in preſerving it, i. 75.
Worldly men, character of, i. 246. blind to the conſolations in Chriſt, ii. 206.

Y

Young Converts, characteriſtics of, i. 3. their firſt bright moments how to be recovered, 7. their overdoings, proceeding from an honeſt ſimplicity of heart, more acceptable to God, than a certain coolneſs that takes place afterwards, 115.

21 JY 64

FINIS.